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ABSTRACT

This report contains the second year evaluation of the Student Assistance Program (SAP) in Pennsylvania. These school-based and school-linked programs address barriers to learning for youth at risk for social and emotional problems, drug and alcohol use and abuse, and depression. Second year evaluation focused on identifying essential components related to SAP, delineating indicators for each component area, and outlining a benchmarking process for technology transfer and ongoing improvement. The six areas include: (1) referral processes; (2) parent consent practices; (3) intervention; (4) contract provider assessments; (5) school-based probation officers' SAP involvement; and (6) SAP improvement and satisfaction. The evaluation produced three outcomes. First, nine SAP component areas and corresponding indicators were identified. Second, the evaluation findings suggest a strategy to improve SAP effectiveness and best practices at the school level. Third, a handbook was produced to summarize and present the salient findings of the evaluation in a user-friendly format. The handbook provides all SAP participants with a means to monitor and improve their programs. This report includes the following sections: (1) Introduction; (2) Methodology; (3) Results; (4) Incorporation of Components and Indictors Results to the Field; and (5) Technology Transfer. (Contains 2 appendixes; 6 tables; 1 figure; and 8 resources.) (JDM)

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STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRGAM IN PENNSYLVANIA
EVALUATION FINAL REPORT

Submitted to:
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October, 2000

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The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program Evaluation is funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Student Assistance Program in Pennsylvania Evaluation Executive Summary

In July of 1999, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Department of Education funded the second year of the evaluation of Student Assistance Programs (SAP) in Pennsylvania. Year two efforts focused on identifying essential components related to SAP, delineating indicators for each component area, and outlining a benchmarking process for technology transfer and ongoing improvement of SAP. The evaluation produced three significant outcomes.

First, using a modified Delphi process, nine SAP component areas and corresponding indicators were identified. The process included a literature review, a survey and focus group process with the statewide student assistance advisory committee, SAP Commonwealth approved trainers, Pennsylvania Association of Student Assistance Professionals conference participants, members of county coordination teams and SAP district councils, and school site visits.

Second, the evaluation findings suggest a strategy to improve SAP effectiveness. The findings indicate that increased training and development of SAP stakeholders in Components Four (Parent Participation) and Seven (Follow-up and Support) will have a positive impact on SAP performance and best practices at the school level.

Third, a Components and Indicators Handbook was produced to summarize and present the salient findings of the evaluation in a user-friendly format. The Handbook provides all SAP stakeholders with a concise, informative, and usable means to monitor and improve their programs. The centerpiece of the Handbook is the Components and Indicators Checklist that can serve as an instrument for assessing, developing, and benchmarking SAP programs. Furthermore, we present strategies for using the components and indicators to formulate an action improvement plan. The Components and Indicators Handbook is available on the Department of Education website: http://www.sap.state.pa.us/

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

In July of 1998, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) funded an initiative to evaluate Student Assistance Programs (SAP) in Pennsylvania. The primary goal of the evaluation was to determine the overall efficacy of Student Assistance Programs in Pennsylvania.

This evaluation investigated six areas of student assistance programs and developed a framework to guide future evaluations. The six areas were:

- SAP referral processes
- Parent consent practices
- Intervention services
- Contract provider assessments
- School-based probation officers' SAP involvement
- SAP improvement and satisfaction

Summary of Year One Results

The conclusions of the first year of study as outlined in the Evaluation Report are as follows:

- A defined well-communicated referral process is operational in most of the teams, and the potential referrers know how to access and utilize the student assistance team.
- SAP teams contact and involve parents in the process. In cases where parents refuse SAP services, the primary reasons include denial that a problem exists and privacy issues.
- SAP teams are making recommendations for a variety of services including assessments and are monitoring students on an ongoing basis.
- D&A and MH liaison services are in place providing preliminary assessment and linkage with service providers.
- An increasing number of schools are receiving services from school-based probation officers. Their involvement in SAP is evolving in accordance with the changing times in school settings. These officers have specialized knowledge of a limited student population and initially their participation was limited to their professional role and function. Currently their role is expanding to become a skilled resource to the team.
- While currently not extensively practiced, the assessment of parent and student satisfaction has the potential to contribute to the continued quality improvement of SAP.
- Suggestions for improvement of SAP were provided by team members and county administrators. However, their prioritization of suggestions reflects their role in the SAP process.

Aims of Year Two

In July of 1999, the PCCD and PA Department of Education (PDE) funded a continuation of the initiative in order to identify essential components related to SAP, delineate indicators for each component area, identify factors related to exemplary and struggling SAP teams and outline a benchmarking process for technology transfer and continual improvement of SAP.

The activities accomplished in the second year of the study include:

- Literature review of SAP and adolescent risk factors
- Identification of essential components of SAP based on literature review and Year 1 results
- Delineation of specific indicators of effective SAPs via focus groups, site visits and analysis of Year 1 data
- Site visits of exemplary and struggling teams
- Establishment of specific components and indicators
- Development of a common unit of analysis to link data sources
- Development of user friendly written materials explaining the utilization of benchmarks and indicators
- Development and delivery of a training module for the Commonwealth Approved Training System

The continuation of the SAP evaluation was accomplished by an interdisciplinary team of researchers and evaluators from three institutions: the University of Pittsburgh, School of Education; St. Francis Medical Center, Division of Psychiatric and Addiction Services; and KIT Solutions, Inc.

SECTION TWO

METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING COMPONENTS AND INDICATORS

The methodology for the component and indicator development was a modified Delphi process that consisted of a literature review, a survey and focus group process with the State-wide student assistance advisory committee, SAP Commonwealth approved trainers, Pennsylvania Association of Student Assistance Professionals conference participants, and members of county coordination teams members and SAP district councils, and school site visits. Presented in this section are the results of the literature review, descriptions of the survey and focus group process, and site visit protocol.

Literature Review

The first step in the development of the components and indicators was completion of a comprehensive literature review of research on school-based and school-linked programs and services that address barriers to learning for youth at risk for social and emotional problems, drug and alcohol use and abuse, and depression. Reviewed was literature from the fields of student assistance programs, health education, school psychology, guidance counseling, school health services, social work, school effectiveness, mental health counseling, drug and alcohol prevention, intervention, and treatment, and student outcomes and achievement. Guiding the literature review were three Pennsylvania Department of Education Basic Education Circulars (24 PS: §15-1547, 1997; 22 PA:§12-31, 1997; 20 USC: 1232h, 1997) that focus on the structure and process of SAP in Pennsylvania, parental rights and role in SAP, and protection of pupil rights. Additional documents included the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education Guidelines for the Commonwealth Training System (1998) as well as the Standards and Core Competencies for Student Assistance Core Team Professionals (1998). Also guiding the review were the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Student Assistance Programs, Minimum Guidelines for County Mental Health Programs (1997) and the National Association of Student Assistance Program Guidelines for SAP design and implementation (1999). From these sources nine component areas were identified as critical for effective student assistance program design, implementation, and evaluation in Pennsylvania.

- Policy and Procedures
- Communications
- Referral Mechanisms
- Parent Participation

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- Team Planning
- Intervention and Recommendations
- Follow-up and Support
- Training
- Outcome Indicators and Evaluation

The following review of the literature was undertaken to establish the practical and theoretical bases of the components and potential indicators of SAP effectiveness. The review embraced literature from the above mentioned to better understand how these components and potential indicators have been employed by others, thus informing SAP stakeholders of the variety of ways in which these components and indicators can inform and improve SAP practice.

Policy and Procedures

In order for any program to succeed clear statements of policy and procedure are required; furthermore, policies and procedures must be cohesive. Lacking cohesiveness often results in organizations working at cross-purposes. In SAP, clear and cohesive statements of policies and procedures are necessary if programs aimed at addressing barriers to student learning are to be successful (Adelman & Taylor, 1999). As Adelman and Taylor caution, fragmentation of policies and procedures concerned with overcoming barriers to learning only proves to be harmful to children, families, and neighborhoods.

Those programs that are most effective in tackling the issues of children and families at risk are those that have adopted a community-based, holistic philosophy (Children, Youth, and Families at Risk, {CYFAR}, 1999). Children are seen in the contexts of family and community. The family serves as the entity that offers nurturance to children. The community offers, ideally, economic, educational, and health support to families. Moreover, effective programs are able to enlist the assistance of a variety of organizations, agencies, and citizens who work collaboratively in aiding children and families at risk.

It is incumbent not only upon schools, but families, health care workers, the media, and community organizations to be actively involved in tackling health and social problems (Centers for Disease Control, {CDC}, 2000). Schools can help to provide cohesion to policies and procedures by providing a critical facility in which families, agencies, and community organizations are able to align their services with the needs of students.

The CDC (2000) has developed an eight-component model of coordinated school health programs. While all eight of the components are critical to a coordinated school health program,

two of the components are especially relevant to the SAP model: Counseling and Psychological Services and Parent/Community Involvement.

Counseling and Psychological Services entail group and individual assessment, intervention, and referral to enhance the emotional, mental, and social lives of students. Parent/ Community Involvement concerns the involvement of a broad-based constituency that includes parents, school health advisory councils, coalitions, and community resources to address the health needs of all students. Parents and community agencies, working together can help schools in a variety of activities directed at helping students overcome barriers to learning. Consistent parental involvement in all phases of the student assistance process is not only crucial to the success of all student assistance services, but assured (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Basic Education Circular, 24§15-1547, 1998; National Association of Student Assistance Programs, {NASAP}, 1999).

NASAP (1999) as well as the Commonwealth Department of Education in the Basic Education Circular, 24§15-1547 (1998), place a great deal of emphasis upon program awareness. Such awareness programs involve the education of parents and the larger community concerning school policy on alcohol, drugs, weapons, and violence, and the SAP services available to students. School Board Policy is essential in this process, for it clearly states a school's stance concerning drugs and violence, the consequences of violations, and states the procedures for seeking help through SAP. School Board Policy also includes information concerning parents' rights and issues of confidentiality for students under 18 years of age. Policies and procedures that are revised regularly as laws relating to drug and alcohol use, parental involvement, violence and weapons change facilitate the creation of limits that help create a safe and secure environment so that all students can succeed.

Communications

Critical to the effectiveness of SAP is the success of efforts to communicate what SAP has to offer to all interested parties (students, teachers, administrators, and parents). The success of SAP depends on how well those who can benefit most know what it has to offer them. Adult collaboration is important in the development of a community of caring and to insure that all those involved grow from the process (Woodruff, Shannon, & Efimba, 1998).

A goal of SAP awareness is to involve students, parents, agencies, and community members of efforts to develop safe and drug-free schools and communities (Commonwealth Department of

Education Basic Education Circular, 24§15-1547, 1998; NASAP, 1999). To attain this goal, parents and community members are informed of school policy concerning substance abuse and violence and what SAP services are available to students to help them overcome barriers to learning. Various methods present themselves for dissemination of SAP information. Each of these methods is especially suited to reach the various interested parties. The methods include: homeroom presentations, SAP posters, newsletters, parent education classes and training, coverage by the media (newspaper, radio, and television), and inclusion in parent and student handbooks (DiRienzo, 1990; NASAP, 1999).

The CDC (2000) has stressed the need for parent and community involvement for enhancing the well being of students. A broad-based constituency of parents, agencies, and community members can offer support for school health programs. One of the ways in which parents are brought into the SAP process is by informing them that they will be notified if concerns are raised around their child's safety, health, or education and by assuring them that they will be involved in all aspects of the SAP process. Indeed. As Adelman and Taylor (1999) urge, efforts to address barriers must include a respect of all those involved and partnership in decision-making and governance.

Referral Mechanisms

When concern about a student arises, one of the most important roles an individual can play is assisting that student in seeking the help she or he needs (School Mental Health Project-UCLA, {SMHP}, 2000). Students infrequently seek help for mental health problems (Stiffman, Chen, Elze, Dore, & Cheng, 1997). Thus, it is critical that individuals be available who can identify students' problems and be knowledgeable about services. Stiffman et al. have identified four "service sectors" that may function as conduits to mental health services: child welfare, juvenile justice, health, and education. Stiffman et al. identify teachers as the professionals most likely to be consulted.

It is critical that the nature and scope of the students' problems be appreciated from various perspectives, such as family, school staff, peers, and so forth. This also includes understanding the nature of the student's problem. The CDC (2000) suggests that psychological services be aimed at the mental, emotional, and social health of all students. The purpose of referral in SAP is the identification and referral of students confronting barriers to learning to a multi-disciplinary team (Commonwealth Department of Education Basic Education Circular, 24§15-1547, 1998;

NASAP, 1999). Referrals may be made by parents, school administrators, peers, staff, or self-referral.

According to SMHP (2000) a referral process that is client oriented should include:

- Readily accessible information about resources
- Mechanisms for helping students and their families appreciate the need for and benefits from resources
- Accountability for problems of access (for example, cost and location)
- Services for helping students and their families review their options and make the best decisions
- Support and guidance to enable students and their families to connect with resources
- Follow-up procedures to determine if referral decisions were appropriate and beneficial

"Referrals are relatively easy to make; appropriate referrals are harder; and ensuring follow-through is the most difficult thing of all" (SMHP, 2000, p. 1). Case monitoring is essential for any referral to be effective. However, this is often overlooked, leaving stakeholders uninformed as to the status of the student's care. Monitoring must continue until the student's needs have been addressed.

In order for school-based services to be effective in ameliorating the difficulties of students, it is essential that the efforts of all be coordinated (Larson, 1992). As more people become involved in efforts to help a student, information about that student will often need to be shared. At this point, confidentiality of information about a student and her or his family becomes a critical issue. In Jaffee v. Redmond, 1996, the United States Supreme Court made patent the importance of confidentiality in relation to mental health treatment.

Parent Participation

The CDC (2000) urges schools to actively seek parent participation in any integrated approach for enhancing the well being of students. Educators can learn from the wisdom and experience of parents. Students can benefit from consistent goals at home and at school. Parents can learn skills for behavior management and academic support. For these things to happen parents need to be seen as partners and advocates (Vosler-Hunter & Hanson, 1992). As partners and advocates, parents need to prepare for their expanded role in their children's education. First, as Vosler-Hunter and Hanson suggest, parents need to understand their rights. This should include encouragement from school staff and administration in order for parents to feel as though they are respected partners in their children's education. Second, parents need to know that their involvement need not be limited to meetings, conferences with teachers, and home support of

their children, but may include membership on advisory boards. Parents may also be policy makers. To be effective policy makers parents need to rely on their expertise as parents, garner support from other parents, be willing to take chances, and maintain their objectivity.

Numerous research studies have demonstrated that parent and family involvement increases student achievement and success (Catsambis & Garland, 1997; Cotton, 1994; Epstein, 1991; Epstein, & Dauber, 1995; Griffith, 1997; Henderson, & Berla, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 1997; Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher: 1998; Olmstead, & Rubin, 1982; Paulson, 1994; Sanders, 2000; USED, 1997). The benefits of involving parents are not confined to the elementary grades. There are significant gains at all ages and grade levels. Junior and senior high students whose parents remain involved make better transitions, maintain the quality of their work, and develop realistic plans for the future.

Children from diverse backgrounds tend to do better when parents and professionals collaborate to bridge the gap between the culture at home and the learning institution. Student behaviors such as alcohol use, violence and antisocial behavior decrease as parental involvement increases (Epstein et.al, 1995).

A number of programs have been developed that encourage parent participation. Lewis, Marine, and Van Horn (1992) have compiled a list of guidelines that should be considered when developing a parent participation program: (a) The program should promote effective two-way communication and collaboration between parents and teachers; (b) The program should teach parents to actively support their children's learning in collaboration with the school staff; (c) The school staff should provide ongoing support for parents; (d) Parents should get involved in program improvement efforts; (e) Ongoing parent training should be offered.

It is a commonplace that parents are busy people. Effective programs need to accommodate the life styles of parents. Some existing programs address specific needs, with others address a variety of concerns. Whether programs address specific or general needs, it is critical that they increase parent participation in their children's education. For example, Administrators of the South Bend, Indiana, Community Schools, sought to establish communication among parents, teachers, and administrators. In 1982, they created a parent network within the district that (a) provided an avenue for communications between home and school, (b) identified the needs and concerns of parents concerning their child's education, (c) generated positive public support for the schools, and (d) identified community resources for both home and school (Lewis, Marine, &

Van Horn, 1991). All of those involved in this program have found it beneficial in maintaining communication between home and school, and has helped to establish understanding of the goals parents and educators have for children. Based upon this mutual understanding, parents and educators can support each other in attaining the best outcomes for children.

However, for any school-linked service to be successful it may be necessary for agencies and schools to share information about individual students, for example, medical or academic records, or family history. That such information be kept confidential is essential. The right to privacy has been applied for two purposes: (a) to ensure that independence is maintained in making decisions and (b) to guarantee that personal information is kept private.

Soler and Peters (1993) have described several reasons for protecting the privacy of children and families:

- Confidentiality restrictions prevent the disclosure of potentially embarrassing personal information.
- Confidentiality provisions also prevent the improper dissemination of information about children and families that might increase the likelihood of discrimination against them.
- Protecting confidential information can be necessary to protect personal and family security.
- Children and families want to avoid prejudice or differential treatment by people such as teachers, school administrators, and service providers.
- Confidentiality provisions may also be necessary to encourage individuals to avail themselves of services.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education Basic Education Circular 24§15-1547,1998 assures parent rights to be involved in all phases of the process and see all school files pertaining to their child. The document further outlines: "Involvement of parents in all phases of the SAP process underscores parents' role and responsibility in the decision-making process and is the key to successful resolution of problems (p.2, 1998)."

Team Planning

The role of the SAP team is to assist in gathering and evaluating objective data and faculty observations and to recommend school and community resources. This includes matching the needs of students with the most appropriate school and community resources (Commonwealth Department of Education Basic Education Circular, 24§15-1547, 1998). The over-arching goal is to reach as many students as possible and link them to those individuals and agencies best suited to help them (NASAP, 1999).

Team planning and organization is critical to SAP. Regular meeting times and places serve to make the team work effectively (DiRienzo, 1990;NASAP, 1999). Furthermore, the roles taken by team members need to be delineated, with each member of the SAP team acquiring a clear understanding of her or his roles and responsibilities (e.g. leader, secretary, case manager). DiCecco, Rosenblum, Taylor, and Adelman (2000) argue that a key to team planning is the clarification of roles and functions. In order for a team to be effective and to maintain operational mechanisms, DiCecco et al. have described three steps needed to ensure the effective development of a team:

- Initiation of the process: Members of the school community are identified as prospective team members; the school agrees to maintain the team once it has been formed.
- Development of mechanisms for maintenance: The team and its operations are institutionalized. This is necessary for the team to be maintained and to evolve.
- Ongoing support provided: Once a team has been formed and working, it is critical that it be monitored and supported to insure its effectiveness.

For a SAP team to function properly it needs an organization structure that clearly defines what is expected of team members. Furthermore, the team must be a part of the school insofar as it has a meets regularly and has access to resources (e. g. telephones, materials, and secretarial help). Communication among team members is essential as well (NASAP, 1999).

Intervention and Recommendations

Interventions addressing barriers to learning need to be comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated (Adelman & Taylor, 1999). For instance, community agencies and in-school counselors can work together to help students with assessment, evaluation, and counseling for a variety of educational, substance abuse, mental health, or family concerns (Commonwealth Department of Education Standards & Core Competencies for Student Assistance Core Team Professionals, 1998; NASAP, 1999). Community agencies, including parents and law enforcement, can work together helping schools with technical assistance and prevention activities.

As noted by Adelman and Taylor (1999), a multifaceted approach to intervention is critical. NASAP (1999) echoes this notion by urging a comprehensive multi-disciplinary approach to prevention, intervention, and support that is tied to other school-based programs. The Pennsylvania Standards and Core Competencies for Student Assistance Core Team Professionals urge also that SAP be part of the larger system of supports in school and in the community.

Further, these competencies guide the team in a risk and protective factor framework that build on the student's strengths and assets, as well as identifying the challenges and barriers to learning (1998). Integral to this effort is the identification and mobilization of services and personnel best suited to meet the needs of students. Also, consideration must be given to the diversity found among students, with actions taken based upon the needs of diverse populations.

In order for a program to evolve and to best meet the needs of students apposite evaluation and accountability procedures are required in order to enhance intervention strategies, refine objectives, and improve program activities, making them more relevant to students' needs (Adelman & Taylor, 1999; Commonwealth Department of Education Standards & Core Competencies for Student Assistance Core Team Professionals, 1998; NASAP, 1999).

Follow-up and Support

Once an intervention has taken place and recommendations made it is critical to the process that follow-up and support services be in place to ensure that students receive the help they need (Commonwealth Department of Education Standards & Core Competencies for Student Assistance Core Team Professionals, 1998). Case management provides an approach to monitor each student's progress in academics and behavior and to identify needed changes in the services offered to the student (NASAP, 2000). Different situations will require different amounts of follow-up and support (Ideas into Practice, 1997). Thus, it is important that a system be in place that will assign case monitors based on the situation.

As noted by Adelman and Taylor (1999), any program aimed at helping students overcome barriers to learning must be held accountable through quality improvement evaluations that are tied to performance-based evaluations. Continued problem analysis will help to determine if an intervention is appropriate and if the student is making progress (Ideas into Practice, 1997). A key to follow-up activities is the sharing of status updates among all parties involved.

Training

Critical to the success of Pennsylvania SAP is a well-trained staff, both in the school and in the community (Commonwealth Department of Education Basic Education Circular, 24§15-1547, 1998). A reason a program may not succeed is inadequate training of staff (Kazdin, 1993). Thorough training of teachers and school staff is critical, according to Kazdin. Effective mental health services in schools require understanding of core competencies by all parties involved (Flaherty, Garrison, Waxman, Uris, Keys, Glass-Siegel, & Weist, 1998). Flaherty et al. stress the

importance of collaboration and point to the barriers that prevent collaboration. Coordinating these perspectives is critical. Flaherty et al. suggest that training in the collaborative process should be provided for all. Pennsylvania provides this through a comprehensive training system of private providers approved by the Department of Education (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education Guidelines for the CATS (1998). Because each of these groups approach school services from different perspective, the Pennsylvania SAP training allows each group to recognize their own and others' strengths and competencies, while, building a common knowledge base.

The Pennsylvania Standards and Core Competencies for SAP Core Team Training describe the knowledge and skills that are considered necessary for effective SAP practice. Professional training for team members is required to ensure the suitability of the suggested services, and effective collaboration and fulfillment of state and federal laws protecting the privacy rights of parents and students. The thorough training of team members, which results in a certificate from the approved training provider, assures the board of school directors, school administrators, parents, students and the public that team members have received state of the art professional training consistent with accountable standards and proper professional actions (Commonwealth Department of Education Basic Education Circular, 24§15-1547, 1998).

Such training must consider the unique culture of the school and family community (Commonwealth Department of Education Standards & Core Competencies for Student Assistance Core Team Professionals, 1998; NASAP, 2000). As suggested by Billy, Grady, Wenzlow, Brener, Collins, and Kann (2000) a major factor in school provision of health services "is the opportunity structure created by school and community characteristics" (p. 13). The school environment plays an integral role in the quality of a child's academic, social/emotional, moral, and behavioral functioning (Roeser, 1998). Adelman and Taylor (1998) argue for "a well-designed and supported infrastructure. . .to establish, maintain, and evolve, this type of comprehensive, programmatic approach" that will support school-wide enabling (p. 148). Enabling refers to policy-oriented school-wide efforts to address barriers to learning.

Outcome Indicators and Evaluation

The United States Department of Education's Principles of Effectiveness requires schools to demonstrate positive outcomes for students as a result of programs, such as Student Assistance, which are funded through the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act. The need for

more focused indicators and outcomes has created a need for evaluation that helps improve practice at the local level.

It has been suggested that the use of administrative data is an effective and efficient way to identify students at-risk for excessive school absence and to define health strategies for school aged children (Kozinetz, 1995). Furthermore, Kozinetz argues that the use of such data may give clues and test hypotheses about the etiology of an outcome. Kozinetz suggests that excessive absences by a student are likely due to health-related reasons. With the identification of such students, the health-related factors that are likely contributing to the absences can be addressed.

A focus on outcomes for students and parents has shifted the focus of interventions from activities to the improvements that are achieved (Wagner, 1995). In an attempt to better understand outcomes, both social and academic, for students with serious emotional disturbances (SED), Wagner utilized the longitudinal database compiled by the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students (NLTS). Wagner found that students with different disabilities had different outcomes not only in comparison with their peers but also with students in the general population. Outcomes for SED students are especially disturbing in that they often find little success in school and in adult life.

However, utilizing the NLTS database Wagner (1995) uncovered various factors related to improved outcomes for these students. These factors include parental involvement, expansion of curricular options to include vocational education, academic placement options, social integration, and collaboration among school, mental health and social service agencies.
In a study of social competence promotion among inner-city and suburban adolescents, Caplan, Weissberg, Grober, Sivo, Grady, and Jacoby (1992) found that school-based social competence skill training was effective in improving coping skills and increasing social adjustment and interpersonal effectiveness.

Literature Review Summary

The literature review generated a list of 94 indicators divided among the nine component areas. Table 5 in SECTION THREE (p. 17) shows the complete list of indicators. The next step in the modified Delphi process was to receive feedback from key informants in the SAP field on what they considered the critical indicators of an effective SAP at the building level. An instrument listing all 94 indicators was developed. On the instrument, individuals are asked to rate each

indicator as being 'absolutely essential', 'helpful but not essential', or 'not necessary'. Demographic information was collected on each respondent.

Statewide Student Assistance Advisory Committee

The initial draft of the 94 indicators was shared with the Statewide SAP advisory committee on January 24,2000 at a meeting in Harrisburg. Attending the meeting were 55 representatives from across the state. Participants included staff from the Departments of Education, Health, and Public Welfare, school districts, and community organizations. Working in small groups indicators were reviewed for each component area. The purpose of the review was to check the face validity of the instrument's structure and content. Indicators were modified and refined based on the committee feedback.

Survey of SAP Commonwealth Approved Trainers

The first group surveyed with the component and indicator instrument was the SAP Commonwealth Approved Trainers. The instrument with a self-addressed stamped envelope was sent January 31, 2000 to all Commonwealth Approved Trainers (n = 86). The response rate was 100%. Table 1 shows the responses by region. Twenty respondents did not identify their region. Seventy seven percent of the trainers reported being current and active SAP team members.

TABLE 1 Commonwealth Approved Trainer Survey Participants by Region (n = 86)

Region I	4	Region VI	3
Region II	5	Region VII	22
Region III	9	Region VIII	20
Region V	3	Region not identified	20

Focus Groups

Five focus groups were conducted. The basis of the focus group was the component and indicator instrument. Members of the focus groups were asked to rate and discuss indicators on the scale of each being 'absolutely essential', 'helpful but not essential', or 'not necessary'. Three focus groups were conducted with county coordination teams and district councils. The county district council coordinators were contacted because the councils are comprised of a representative group of professionals from the field. The groups were with members of the Fayette County Student Assistance Program Coordination Team, Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3, and Armstrong/Indiana SAP District Council. Two additional focus groups were held at the

annual conference of the Pennsylvania Student Assistance Professionals in Harrisburg. Morning and afternoon sessions were conducted. Table 2 summarizes dates, sites, and number of participants in the focus groups.

TABLE 2 Focus Groups: Breakdown of focus groups by site and participants

Date	Site	Participants
February 28, 2000	Fayette County	16
March 8, 2000	AIU III	21
March 16, 2000	Armstrong/Indiana	35
March 27, 2000	PASAP Conference--AM	17
March 27, 2000	PASAP Conference--PM	16

School Site Visits: Exemplary and Struggling

The final step in the modified Delphia process was to talk with school teams about the components and indicators. The site visits served as a method to check the reliability and validity of the indicators within the school and team setting. Visits were made to both exemplary and struggling school SAP sites. A nomination process was used to select school sites to visit. Each participant in the trainer survey and focus groups was asked to identify exemplary and/or struggling school SAP teams. These formed the basis for the school site visit selection process. Schools recommended for site visits were crosschecked to assure that the teams had participated in the State-wide team survey in year one as part of the year one evaluation process. A representative selection of schools was made by region, type, and grade level. The selection process was anonymous. Table 3 shows the site visit distribution. At no time during the school site visit process was a school identified as being exemplary or struggling. School visits were one half day.

TABLE 3 Site Visits by location and school type

Exemplary Schools	Struggling Schools
Region VIII - Suburban Middle School	Region I - Urban Jr/Sr High School
Region VIII - Urban High School	Region II - Rural Middle School
Region IX - Suburban Jr/Sr High	Region VI - Rural High School

SAP coordinators were contacted and sent a confirmation letter in preparation for the site visit. The component and indicator instrument was faxed to the SAP Coordinators who then made

copies to distribute to the team members. In addition to ranking the component qualities, teams were asked how they functioned in relation to the SAP components. Finally, a series of questions was used to clarify the reliability and validity of the indicators. Table 4 lists the questions.

TABLE 4 Site visit questions

• Which components are the most important to your program and why?
• Which are the least important and why?
• What specific indicators are contributing to your successes?
• What specific indicators impede your success?
• What components, if any, do you think your SAP team excels?
• What are some of the challenges your team encounters?
• What are your plans to improve your SAP program?
• What would you build into a quality SAP program?

SECTION THREE

RESULTS

The following section presents the profile of findings from three sources during the modified Delphi process. In each phase of the process the component and indicator instrument was used to refine the list of indicators. The final list of components and indicators can be found in Appendix B. As part of each phase, the evaluation team met to analyze the data and refine the indicator list.

Survey of SAP Commonwealth Approved Trainers

The Commonwealth approved trainers survey results are shown in Table 5. The category of absolutely essential was the only rating considered in the data analysis. Subsequent to the data analysis the top five indicators for each component were used to shape and guide the focus groups and site visit processes.

TABLE 5 Commonwealth approved trainers survey results (n=86)

Component 1: Policy and Procedures

Indicator	% of total responses
Building administrator involvement and support	94 %
Drug & Alcohol SAP liaison works with team	86 %
Mental Health SAP liaison works with team	83 %
Confidentiality of SAP process complies with state and federal laws	80 %
School crisis management plan	71 %
SAP coordinator for the building	69 %
Policy violations and consequences for alcohol, drugs, violence, weapons, tobacco	69 %
SAP structure and organization (including members and titles, clear delineation of roles & responsibilities, meeting times, membership *selection* criteria, member replacement process and leadership)	69 %
Focus on removing barriers to learning and linking to school and community resources	64 %
SAP is identified as school program consistent with Department of Education BEC	62 %
Description of SAP services	58 %
Annual report, and data summary procedures	40 %

Component 2: Communications

Indicator	% of total responses
Staff in-service (type and frequency) – teachers, pupil personnel, support, administrative	86 %
Faculty handbook contains SAP related information	73 %
Student handbook contains SAP related information	69 %
SAP program brochure that reaches parents	64 %
SAP program brochure that reaches faculty	64 %
Periodic review process for insuring that communications materials are accurate and up-to-date	64 %
SAP program brochure that reaches students	58 %
Student training (type and frequency: assembly, classroom, small group, individual)	57 %
Communications plan – specific SAP focus	55 %
Parent handbook contains SAP related information	55 %
Presentation to parents (type and frequency)	47 %

Component 3: Referral Mechanisms

Indicator	% of total responses
SAP accessible to all targeted students	87 %
Screening process – student data collection and review procedure	80 %
Confidentiality guidelines for team well delineated	80 %
Case monitoring (initial and ongoing)	79 %
Formal referral process – written procedure, timeline, responsibilities and tasks	78 %
Respect for and understanding of privacy rights – parents & students	78 %
Consent process well delineated	74 %
Release forms – consent to exchange confidential information with agencies	71 %
Decision making process	67 %
Release forms – release records	63 %

Component 4: Parent Participation

Indicator	% of total responses
Confidentiality guidelines	78 %
Consent process	74 %
Respect for privacy rights	74 %
Release forms – consent to exchange confidential info.	71 %
Policy statement (parent/guardian as decision makers and active consent)	66 %
Formal parent involvement procedure	64 %
Mechanism for developing relationships with parents as students move through the SAP process	58 %
Release forms – release records	55 %
Mechanism for incorporating feedback into team process	48 %
Mechanism for gathering parent input to inform and improve the overall process that the team is using	45 %
Family education and information – prevention and general population focus	28 %

Component 5: Team Planning

Indicator	% of total responses
Meeting time (regular meeting time sufficient to complete work)	83 %
Case assignment and management procedure	69 %
Regular meeting space with access to telephone	67 %
Member role assignments and responsibilities articulated	61 %
Inter-team communication system	52 %
Decision making procedure	49 %
Inter-team conflict resolution strategy	47 %
Meeting agenda	43 %
Meeting minutes completed, reviewed, maintained	40 %

Component 6: Intervention and Recommendations

Indicator	% of total responses
Provide linkages as necessary to assist parents and students to access community services	76 %
Case monitoring (student, parent, recommendation)	76 %
Written guidelines for dealing with problems that are beyond the scope of the school's responsibility – i.e., provision of treatment, suicidal assessment, etc.	64 %
Assessments (school and community) monitoring and feedback to team	63 %
Written information available on community resources and options	56 %
Student and parent intervention and recommendation guidelines	49 %
Mechanism to inform and improve school interventions and recommendations	42 %
Tracking mechanism that measures outcomes	37 %

Component 7: Follow-up and Support

Indicator	% of total responses
Monitoring and follow-up of referred students	72 %
Availability of in-school resources	70 %
Availability of community resources	69 %
Mechanism to promote student access to and compliance with in-school services	66 %
Case monitoring functions (student, parent, intervention recommendation compliance)	63 %
Mechanism to promote student access to and compliance with treatment recommendations	63 %
Referral to other resources in school such as guidance counselor, educational support groups	61 %
Mechanism to promote student access to and compliance with aftercare/continuing support	56 %
Continuing care (aftercare) planning and follow-up	54 %
Periodic SAP file review	54 %
Mechanism to inform and improve follow-up and support	48 %
Tracking mechanism for following student performance	47 %

Component 8: Training

Indicator	% of total responses
SAP team member training: basic/add-on level – PA state accredited provider	88 %
SAP team maintenance – PA state accredited provider	70 %
Adequate training schedule and budget	66 %
SAP team member training: advanced level – PA state accredited provider	57 %
SAP in-service training – school and agency staff – PA state accredited provider	55 %
Materials and resources available and accessible	50 %
SAP team member training: group facilitator training	47 %
Annual training needs assessment targeted by groups (e.g., team members, parents)	45 %
Mechanism to inform and improve training	44 %

Component 9: Outcome Indicators and Evaluation

Indicator	% of total responses
Student data management system – school records: attendance, GPA, failed a course, retained, leaving	69 %
Student monitoring: frequency, duration, intensity, services involvement	67%
SAP acceptability – stakeholders view program as useful, effective, and consistent (e.g., principal)	66 %
Student data management system – behavioral outcomes, D&A, problem behavior	61 %
Student data management system – intervention and recommendation compliance	55 %
Improvement mechanism – student, team members, agency, school staff, and parents	54%
SAP efficacy – extent to which SAP meets goals of removing barriers to learning	54 %
School monitoring of program	47%
Team monitoring: meeting minutes (members, students, recommendations)	47 %
Agency monitoring: referral patterns, level and extent of involvement, student outcomes	47 %
SAP team functioning process and outcome variables (interdisciplinary vs. multidisciplinary)	41 %
Pennsylvania Department of Education tracking system	38 %

Focus Group Results

Policy and Procedures

The overriding critical element to SAP policies and procedures was building administrator involvement and support. Having a building administrator who actively sits on the team was stated to be the key to long-term success. It was recommended that administrators understand the system well; as in some schools where they actually give referrals, use the forms, and follow students. Also identified as important was having a building coordinator (as opposed to district coordinator) who works with the liaisons so that no students fall through the cracks. Having a D&A/MH liaison who works with the team was important and particularly crucial for large districts. Having the SAP structure and organization clearly defined was also seen as a priority. As new people enter join the team, having clear policies and procedures assure that the process can continue uninterrupted.

Communications

Constant communication was seen as key to SAP functioning. Having a plan that addresses parents, faculty, and students were seen as essential. Maintaining consistent visibility by the use of pictures, posters, flyers, brochures, websites, and so forth, was seen as contributing to accessing SAP. Assemblies were seen as too impersonal and should not be relied on to communicate SAP, but could be used in conjunction with other means. It was recommended that every time parents come to school (e.g., for conferences, parent/teacher nights) it should be to educate them about SAP. Staff in-services and orientation were also seen as crucial to SAP success. In-servicing the school board was recommended.

Referral Mechanisms

Formal referrals were considered central to the SAP process, although there was discussion about what constituted "formal". Constant vigilance was stressed as a way to keep the referral process moving. For example, the home and school visitor hand delivers the letter if parent does not return it. Another school sends second letter by registered mail to assure it being received. Making SAP accessible to all targeted students was reported as important as was case monitoring.

Parent Participation

Having a mechanism for gathering parent input to inform and improve the overall team process was viewed as helpful. Although schools often did not have time for this, all felt it was a good idea. Formal parent involvement procedures and policy statement were viewed as essential.

Confidentiality guidelines, release forms (both consent to exchange information and release records), and respect for privacy rights were emphasized by the PASAP focus group.

Team Planning

Member role assignments and responsibilities need to be well articulated for team planning. A regular meeting time (one that fits schedule) and a regular meeting space with access to telephone, computer and email are crucial. Having a space conducive to discussion (e.g. around a table as opposed to a classroom) was also seen as helpful. Meeting minutes that are completed, reviewed, and maintained are needed to stay accountable. An inter-team communication strategy is also viewed as essential. "If we can't resolve problems, how do we expect kids to?" quoted one focus group member.

Intervention and Recommendations

Fundamental to the intervention and recommendation process were assessments with the school and community. Monitoring and feedback to team was cited as being central to avoiding communication gaps with agencies/CYF. Having written information available on community resources and options and written guidelines for dealing with problems that are beyond the scope of SAP were seen as particularly helpful. Vigilant case monitoring is vital.

Follow-up and Support

Availability of in-school and community resources is required to facilitate the system. Monitoring and follow-up of referred students are crucial as often a team lets go of a student prematurely. Promoting student access to and compliance with both in and out of school services is essential. A periodic SAP file review helps to maintain this.

Training

SAP in-service training, both basic and advanced are necessary. Training twice a year is best as well as having advanced training on the latest updates. SAP Team maintenance is considered a priority. Team maintenance is described as also including team appreciation and thank-you's for the additional work required by team members. Availability of substitutes for many different special programs is a constant problem for being on the team and being trained together. An adequate training schedule and budgets need to be included in the SAP plan.

Outcome Indicators and Evaluation

Essential outcome indicators include SAP acceptability to stakeholders and the Pennsylvania Department of Education tracking system. Also was the very important question, "Did the child connect with a caring adult (during the SAP process)?" Furthermore, the evaluation system is the key to student monitoring. Focus group members were concerned about who was doing the monitoring (e.g., liaisons, coordinator, team members, principal). Furthermore, the SAP team must work to make time to do evaluation. The concern is that currently evaluation is a low priority. Plus it is hard to do. .

Site Visit Results: Exemplary Schools

Policy and Procedures

Exemplary schools had very strong building and central office administrative support, either on or off the team. Administrators were highly visible and worked closely with the coordinator. Many also had actively involved drug and alcohol and/or Intermediate Unit SAP liaisons. A full-time coordinator, competent providers, and a therapist in the building assured continuity of care. Most teams reviewed their crisis management plans yearly to assure that SAP was thoroughly integrated into all policies and procedures.

Communications

Effective schools provided ongoing communication, not just at team meetings. Teams updated and revised their communication literature yearly disseminating this information widely through multiple sources. Constant and ongoing communication made SAP accessible to students, parents, and school personnel.

Referral Mechanisms

Schools trained all teachers, including special education teachers in the referral process. Having clear directions to make the referral process user-friendly was developed and constantly refined as needed.

Parent Participation

Parental involvement was a priority for exemplary programs even when contact was difficult. Schools persevered with home and school visitors, registered letters, etc. to assure compliance. Drug and alcohol and mental health treatment agencies often completed Parental Satisfaction Surveys. Family confidentiality was maintained.

Team Planning

A time commitment, including preparation time, was included in the scheduling. Giving staff adequate time was crucial so that team responsibilities did not conflict with other priorities. Administrators, counselors, and liaisons attended meetings without fail.

Intervention and Rècommendations

In-school mental health treatment for identified SAP students was encouraged.
Exemplary schools had well-built agency networks particularly with hospital and partial programs.

Follow-up and Support

Continuous communication was developed to assure that students were adequately supported. Staff was kept informed and held accountable for follow-up.

Training

Even when teams had very small training budgets, teams regularly did a variety of maintenance and continuing education activities. They observed that actively participating in these activities helped them assess their work and make improvements. Regular training allowed them to function better, avoid burn out, and keep up to date.

Outcome Indicators and Evaluation

Good secretarial assistance allowed for continuous data management. Performance data was reviewed yearly and disseminated to stakeholders. Core teams were credited with successes and statistics and data were used to support this. Evaluation was valued and given adequate time to be incorporated into the process.

Site Visit Results: Struggling Schools

Policy and Procedures

Insufficient and unenforced policies and procedures were common in struggling schools. Most of these schools teams were not familiar with their policies, and if they were they were 'on paper' only.

Communications

Style, philosophical and differences in involvement between team members caused communication difficulties. Having no mechanism to resolve problems, teams were unable to

improve their functioning. Since trends change quickly, if the team is not communicating, team members will continue to get further behind.

Referral Mechanisms

There was a widespread belief that once students were identified and referred, their job is finished. It was rarely known if a student made it to the referral or not. Teachers wanted immediate feedback when a student was referred. This caused frustration and conflicting relationships among staff and team members.

Parent Participation

Schools often had a low opinion of parent's interest or capacity to become involved. Truancy and attendance problems were common. With no school staff to assist with follow-through, there was little family involvement.

Team Planning

School schedules determined team planning. When teachers had extra periods, joint periods, or study halls duties, planning periods were lost. Often students were assigned without any meeting. When team members traded cases, students and parents were often lost in the process.

Intervention and Recommendations

When there was a lack of available community resources, team members were unable to do their jobs. Also, when there was constant liaison and staff turnover, the process stopped. In some cases there was a problematic relationship with the county mental health agencies because Managed Care had prevented families from receiving needed services.

Follow-up and Support

School teams were not informed of behavioral plans and/or aftercare instructions when a student was being released to a rehabilitation or psychiatric hospital.

Training

Staff does not willingly attend in-services. A lack of substitutes or scheduling problems interfered with training efforts.

Outcome Indicators and Evaluation

Evaluation is not well regarded and perceived as a chore. It was done haphazardly, if at all.

SECTION FOUR

INCORPORATION OF COMPONENTS AND INDICATORS RESULTS TO THE FIELD

The development of the components and indicators offers the opportunity to assess SAP outcomes. Working toward that goal an investigation was undertaken in year two to link outcomes to SAP implementation at the school level. This section describes the investigation's process and findings.

Mapping the Data

The development of meaningful components and indicators for SAP meant taking advantage of all possible sources of data. Therefore, the methodology was developed in such a way that the qualitative data collected from the current literature, site visits and focus groups could be linked with the quantitative data gained from the Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program State-Wide Survey and the Pennsylvania Department of Education's 1997-1998 State Performance Report on the Student Assistance Program.

Toward this end, a methodology for mapping the qualitative data onto the proposed indicators was developed. First, each survey item was examined to determine whether or not it provided evidence to support one or more of the indicators. Once this process was complete, it was replicated in the same manner for the items on the State Performance Report. The end result was a list of the nine components and, for each of the indicators, the instrument items that correspond to and/or give evidence in support of that indicator.

The main goal to be achieved by the development of components and indicators of SAP team success is a self-evaluation tool that individual SAP teams can use to assess their own functioning. The mapping of individual items onto the proposed indicators served as the first step towards a general scoring measure, wherein the sum of the individual items can serve as a "score" that represents how well the team is achieving the standard set by the indicator.

During the mapping process, several of the indicators identified by SAP team members as "absolutely essential" to effective SAP team functioning were found to have no related survey items. To eliminate this problem and further streamline the mapping process, the full list of indicators and corresponding items was examined. Where it was found that a particular item gave little support for an indicator, that item was either eliminated or moved to support a different

indicator. In addition, some items were given more weight in the scoring procedure; if one item supporting an indicator seemed to be a stronger and more precise representation of the overall indicator than other items (based on what was gleaned from the literature, obtained from focus groups, and the research team's experience with SAP), that item was weighted so that it would constitute a greater portion of the overall indicator score. The final list of indicators and supporting items is provided in Table 6.

TABLE 6 Mapping of Items to Indicators

Component 1: Policy and Procedures

Indicator	Survey items	Event items
1. Building administrator involvement and support	D, F, 2	-
2. Drug & Alcohol and/or Mental Health SAP liaison works with team	D, F, 2, 15, 15a, 16, 16a	-
3. SAP coordinator for the building	D, E, 2, 4, 5, 8a, 24	-
4. Policy violations and consequences for alcohol, drugs, violence, weapons, tobacco	10, 13, 17	-
5. SAP structure and organization (including members and titles, clear delineation of roles & responsibilities, meeting times, membership *selection* criteria, member replacement process and leadership)	C, E, 31	-
6. Focus on removing barriers to learning and linking to school and community resources	9, 11, 13, 17, 29	-

Component 2: Communications

Indicator	Survey items[1]	Event items[2]
1. Description of SAP services	1	
2. Staff in-service (type and frequency) – teachers, pupil personnel, support, administrative	1, 31	-
3. Student communication strategy	1, 31	-
4. Parent communication strategy	1, 31	-

[1] Items from the Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program State-Wide Survey
[2] Items from the Pennsylvania Department of Education's 1997-1998 State Performance Report on the Student Assistance Program

Component 3: Referral Mechanisms

Indicator	Survey items	Event items
1. SAP accessible to all targeted students	31	-
2. Screening process – student data collection and review procedure	8	-
3. Confidentiality guidelines and consent process well delineated: respect for and understanding of parents' & students' privacy rights; use of release forms (consent to exchange confidential information with agencies and to release records)	8b, 26	-
4. Formal referral and decision making process – written procedure, timeline, responsibilities and tasks	3, 6, 7	-

Component 4: Parent Participation

Indicator	Survey items	Event items
1. Formal parent involvement procedure; mechanisms for developing relationships with parents as students move through the SAP process and for gathering parent input to inform and improve the overall process that the team is using	22, 23, 26, 31	15

Component 5: Team Planning

Indicator	Survey items	Event items
1. Meeting time (regular meeting time sufficient to complete work)	C	-
2. Member role assignments and responsibilities articulated	E, 4, 5, 8a, 24	-

Component 6: Intervention and Recommendations

Indicator	Survey items	Event items
1. Provide linkages as necessary to assist parents and students to access community services; written information available on community resources and options; written guidelines for dealing with problems that are beyond the scope of the school's responsibility – i.e., provision of treatment, suicidal assessment, etc.	11, 15, 15a, 16, 16a, 17, 31	18a, 18b, 18c

Component 7: Follow-up and Support

Indicator	Survey items	Event items
1. Case monitoring: initial, ongoing, and follow-up of referred students, and a mechanism to inform and improve follow-up and support	29	16, 17b, 18c, 20
2. Availability of resources (in-school and community)	14, 15, 15a, 16, 16a, 17, 21	17b, 18b
3. Mechanism to promote student access to and compliance with: (a) in-school services, (b) treatment recommendations, and (c) compliance with aftercare/continuing support	31, 32	-

Component 8: Training

Indicator	Survey items	Event items
1. SAP team member training: basic/add-on and advanced level – PA state accredited provider	L, M	-
2. SAP team maintenance – PA state accredited provider	31	-
3. Adequate training schedule and budget	31	-

Component 9: Outcome Indicators and Evaluation

Indicator	Survey items	Event items
1. Student data management system & tracking mechanisms	14, 29, 29a	17b, 18c, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25
2. Monitoring & improvement mechanisms	28, 28a, 29, 29a	-

The next step in the development of components and indicators was the analysis of quantitative data to validate the proposed components and indicators and to establish (if possible) relationships between these indicators and team functioning. A description of the quantitative data and the analyses performed follows.

Description of Databases from Year One Evaluation

The first database consists of SAP team member responses to the Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program State-Wide Survey, which was conducted in January of 1999. The purpose of the survey was to obtain the information regarding the structure of the Student Assistance Program in the school, the effectiveness of the program and the challenges encountered from the perspective of the team member. Data collected from the survey was entered into a central database.

The second data source utilizes the Pennsylvania Department of Education's 1997-1998 State Performance Report on the Student Assistance Program. Data are gathered annually from SAP teams in public, non-public, and area vocational-technical schools regarding the services provided to students during the school year and are based on the team member's perspectives in reviewing each student who has been seen by SAP during the school year. Aspects included in the report include referrals to the team, types of services recommended, types of assessments, team knowledge regarding student access of services and changes in performance indicators such as academic achievement, advancement, attendance, and student improvement. These data, which are gathered both objectively and subjectively by team members, are entered on scanning sheets and forwarded to a central location for processing.

A limitation of the database is that it does not provide an objective comparison of change in student performance over time, which may be attributed to the student's involvement in SAP. In other words, it does not include students' pre- and post-SAP performance records. There were also some inconsistencies in the numbers reported which suggest that some of the team members may not have been completing the forms accurately.

Procedure for linking two databases

The planned analysis of both the SAP Survey data and the state-compiled data reported by team members was predicated on the ability to determine a common unit of analysis. Whereas the SAP survey results produced one set of responses per survey respondent, the data collected by the state represents the status of each SAP referral. Since these reports are only identified by case numbers, one student could conceivably have produced multiple reports, if that student was referred more than once in the same school year. This discrepancy in the unit of analysis for the two databases was reconciled through the development of a common unit of analysis.

The SAP survey database contained a total of 1207 records, one record per SAP team member. The Statewide Performance Database contained a total of 59,269 records, one record per case (or event). One variable contained in both databases was an identifying code for a particular school building. Hence, the records in both databases could be categorized according to the school building from which the responses were obtained. This variable (school building) was used as the common unit of analysis for the construction of the combined database and subsequent analyses.

Both survey and event data had been collected for a total of 159 school buildings. Due to missing data in both databases, only 147 school building codes were present in the two databases. Use of

a common unit of analysis required that the user- or event-level data be aggregated or manipulated to create a new set of variables at the school building level. This involved the development of an index for each variable present in the two original databases. For the data in the Statewide Performance Database, the index variable was most often a percentage of total referrals. As an example, the ninth item on the data collection form records the race of the referred student as White, Black, American Indian, and so forth. The building-level index variable simply represented the percentage of a school building's referrals that were categorized in each of the race categories. Similarly, the outcome variables were aggregated to represent the percentage of referrals per school building showing improvement, and so forth, instead of the outcome for each individual referral.

Data from the Statewide Survey were aggregated in a different manner, since each school building participating in the survey had a varying number of respondents (with respondents serving in different roles in the building's SAP program). Additionally, SAP team members from the same school building did not necessarily respond unanimously to survey items. Therefore, the index for many of the survey items was constructed from the most frequently endorsed response among the respondents for each school building. For example, item C of the survey asks:

> How often does the SAP team meet during the school year? (**MARK ONLY ONE**)
>
> O Less than once a month
> O Once a month
> O Every 2 weeks
> O Once a week
> O Two or more times a week
> O Unsure

A frequency distribution of team member responses to this item was examined; if the team members were in consensus, the value of the index variable for that school building was simply the unanimous response. If a consensus among respondents did not exist, but a clear majority of a team's member selected a particular response, that response was used for the value of the index variable. As an example, if a team consisting of 6 members responded to item C such that 5 members chose "Once a month" and 1 member chose "Every 2 weeks," the most frequently chosen response, "Once a month," was used for the index variable.

In cases where neither a consensus nor a clear majority existed, the responses were sorted by the respondent's professional position in the school. Responses from building administrators and SAP coordinators were given more weight in "tie-breaking" situations. If additional information could not give rise to a clear majority, the more conservative alternative was used for the index variable.

This methodology, applied consistently, resulted in the creation of a single database with school building as the unit of analysis. This database was then utilized to validate indicators for each of the nine component areas that contribute to SAP program success.

Findings

Specific Components and Indicators

For each of the nine component areas, the corresponding indicators were "scored" using the quantitative data sources mentioned above. Therefore, each of the 147 school buildings obtained a score that represented how well their SAP team was meeting the standard set by each of the 23 indicators. For ease of interpretation and consistency, each of the indicator scores was placed on the same scale. The final index for each indicator was a score on a scale from 0 to 100. Higher scores represent more evidence of attaining the standard set by the indicator; therefore, higher scores can be interpreted as evidence of successful functioning in that specific indicator domain. Histograms displaying the distribution of index scores for all nine component areas are shown in Appendix A.

Specific Components and Indicators That Relate to Team Functioning

The next step of the analyses focused on identifying relationships among the components and indicators and how the indicators may relate to team functioning. A matrix of Pearson correlation coefficients was prepared for the nine components. This matrix is displayed in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 Pearson Correlation Coefficients for All Pairs of SAP Components

Components

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*
1	1.0	-.034	.063	**.195**	-.011	-.009	.040	.028	.130
2		1.0	.102	.135	.094	**.179**	**.215**	**.282**	-.038
3			1.0	**.565**	**.233**	.049	**.318**	.145	.106
4				1.0	**.204**	.104	**.368**	**.185**	.101
5					1.0	-.007	.077	.094	**.183**
6						1.0	**.892**	.120	.065
7							1.0	**.201**	.060
8								1.0	-.053
9									1.0

Significant correlations ($p < .05$) are marked in bold. (Components: 1 = Policy and Procedures; 2 = Communications; 3 = Referral Mechanisms; 4 = Parent Participation; 5 = Team Planning; 6 = Intervention and Recommendations; 7 = Follow-up and Support; 8 = Training; 9 = Outcome Indicators and Evaluation)

As shown by the correlation matrix, several of the components are related to each other in such a way that would have implications for SAP team functioning. Parent Participation (Component 4) was found to have significant correlation with five of the nine components. Likewise, Follow-up and Support (Component 7) was significantly correlated with five components. According to the findings, strengthening these two components would have the biggest positive impact on SAP practices.

Strengthening parent participation, according to the findings would yield improvements in SAP implementation in the areas of Policy and Procedures (Component 1), Referral Mechanisms (Component 3), Team Planning (Component 5), Follow-up and Support (Component 7), and Outcome Indicators and Evaluation (Component 9). Likewise, improvements in Follow-up and Support will have a positive impact on Communications (Component 2), Referral Mechanisms (Component 3), Parent Participation (Component 4), Intervention and Recommendations (Component 6), and Training (Component 8).

Furthermore, Team Planning (Component 5) and Training (Component 8) were found to have significant correlation with three of the eight components. Improvements in Team Planning will

affect Referral Mechanisms (Component 3), Parent Participation (Component 4) and Outcome Indicators and Evaluation (Component 9). Strengthening Training (Component 8) affects Referral (Component 3), Parent Participation (Component 4) and Follow-up and Support (Component 7)

A final step was taken to investigate SAP outcomes in relation to the components and indicators. An attempt was made to explore the correlations between the components and indicators and the event databases. Specifically, the relationship of the proposed indicators to the student outcome variables collected for the state performance database was investigated. None of the nine components or the indicators was significantly correlated with the six outcome variables in the state performance database. These outcome variables measured (a) the percentage of each school building's referred students who improved since the current year's referral; (b) percentage of students with improved attendance; (c) percentage of students whose general academic performance improved; (d) percentage of students suspended since their referral; (e) percentage of students who violated D&A policy since their referral; and (f) the percentage of referred students who were promoted/graduated.

Though none of these correlations were found to be statistically significant, the weakness of the outcome data (as mentioned in the description of the Statewide Performance Database, please see the year one report) may account for the results. With stronger, more valid outcome measures, it is possible that future analyses may discover potential predictive relationships between the proposed SAP components and indicators and student outcomes.

SECTION FIVE

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Components and Indicators Handbook

The final element of the SAP evaluation was to translate the findings into a user friendly and accessible package for the SAP practitioners. Motivating the material development was the need to focus on how to improve SAP practice with an emphasis on best practices. Therefore, the materials developed focused on supporting best SAP practice at a local level. The materials are primarily focused on school SAP teams. They have been packaged in a single booklet available from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and on the web (http://www.sap.state.pa.us/): Pennsylvania Student Assistance Component and Indicator Handbook. The handbook contents are contained in Appendix B.

Central to the Handbook is the Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program Effectiveness Checklist and the Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program Performance Improvement Plan. The Checklist items are the component indicator items found through the evaluation to be measures of SAP effectiveness. The Improvement Plan uses data generated from the Checklist to guide the plan development. Use of the Checklist with specific stakeholder groups is also included (e.g. parents, administrators).

How successful attempts are at bettering SAP at the school level depends on adequate implementation of improvement strategies presented in the handbook. A 360 degree process is described and encouraged as a means to collect information and feedback from the range of SAP stakeholders. Furthermore, schools are instructed on how to develop and use individual school SAP benchmarks of each component.

The Commonwealth Approved Trainers and Department of Education staffs were trained in the use of the Handbook with SAP team members and stakeholders in August, 2000. Since the training the Handbook has been widely disseminated throughout Pennsylvania. Initial utilization is high with CAT trainers reporting dissemination through training programs, in-services, and individual school consultations.

In the future, the components and indicators can serve as the structure for SAP evaluation and research. It provides the opportunity to compare and contrast SAP programs with the goal of improved SAP practice and services to students.

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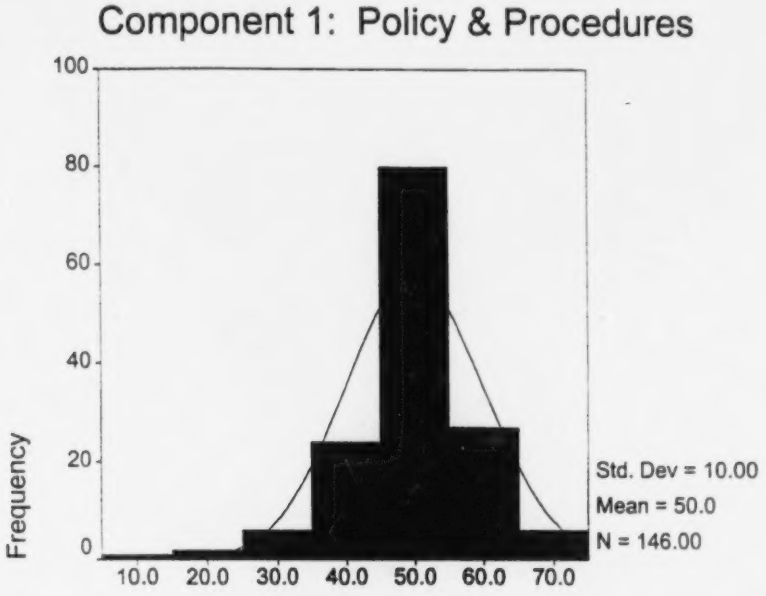
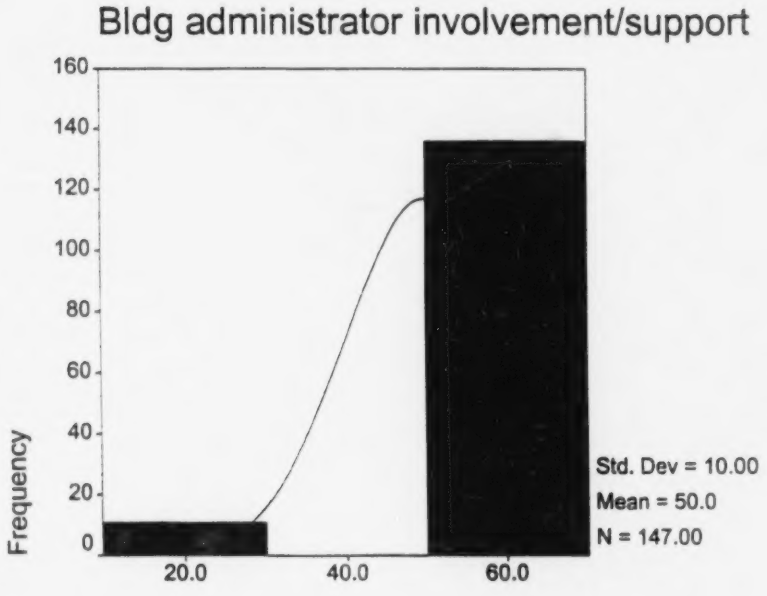
APPENDIX A

Histograms Displaying the Distribution of Index Scores for the Nine Components Areas

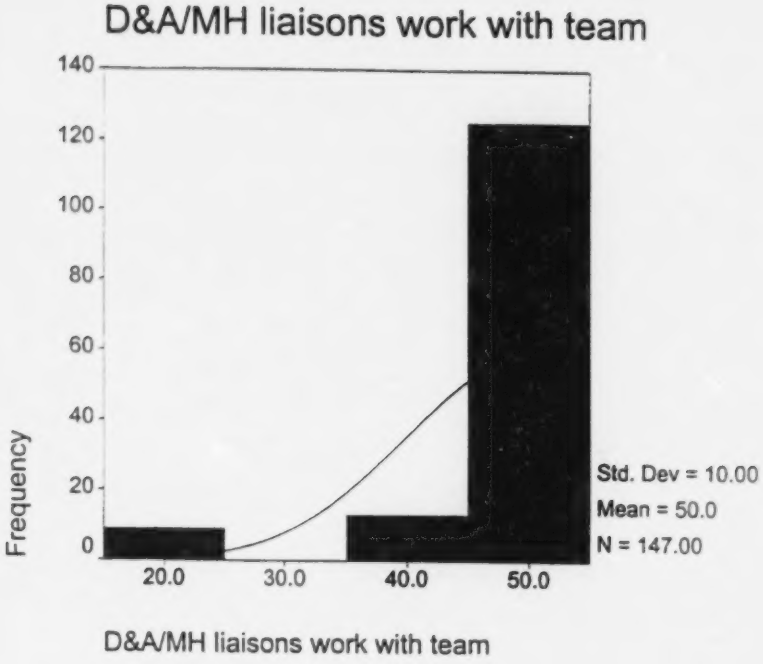
Frequencies

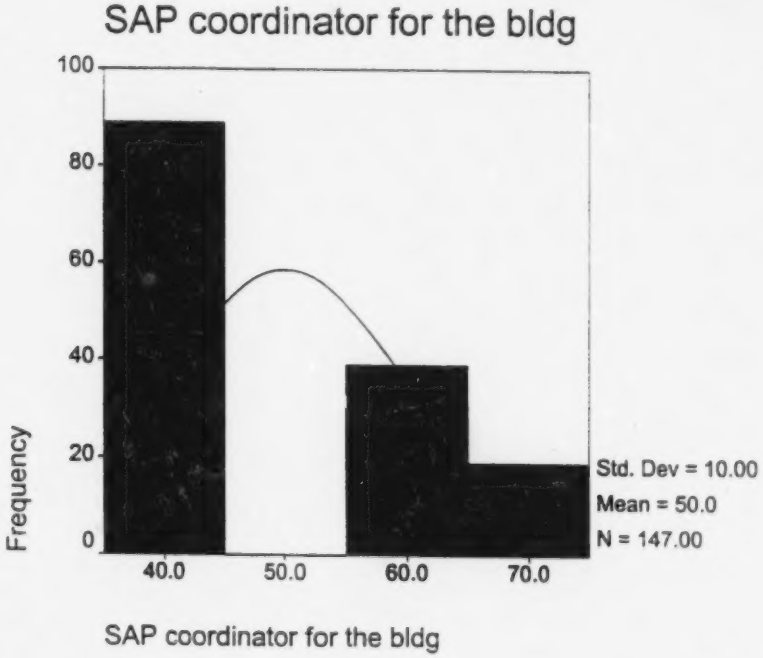


Component 1: Policy & Procedures



Bldg administrator involvement/support


D&A/MH liaisons work with team
Frequency
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
20.0
30.0
40.0
50.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
D&A/MH liaisons work with team


SAP coordinator for the bldg
Frequency
100
80
60
40
20
0
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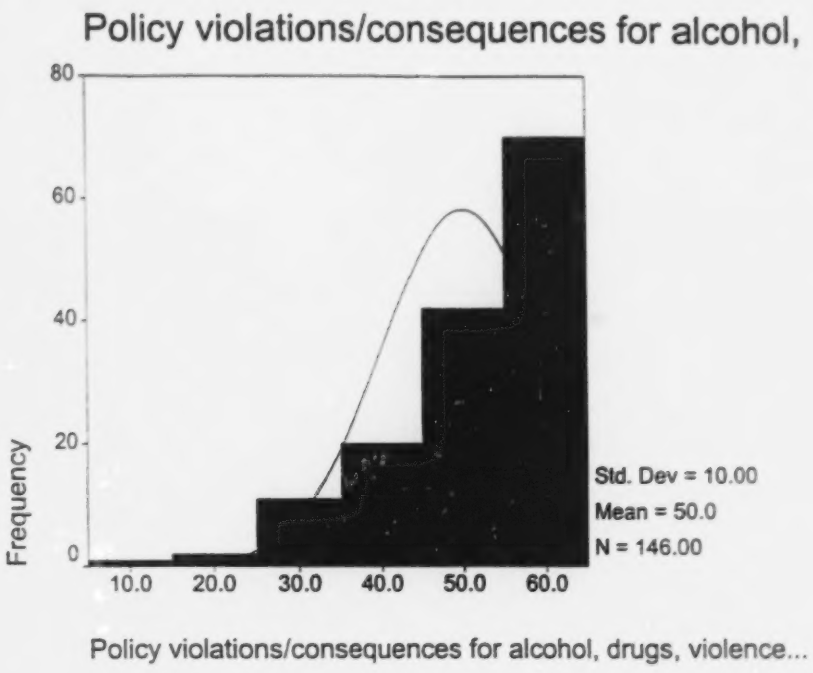
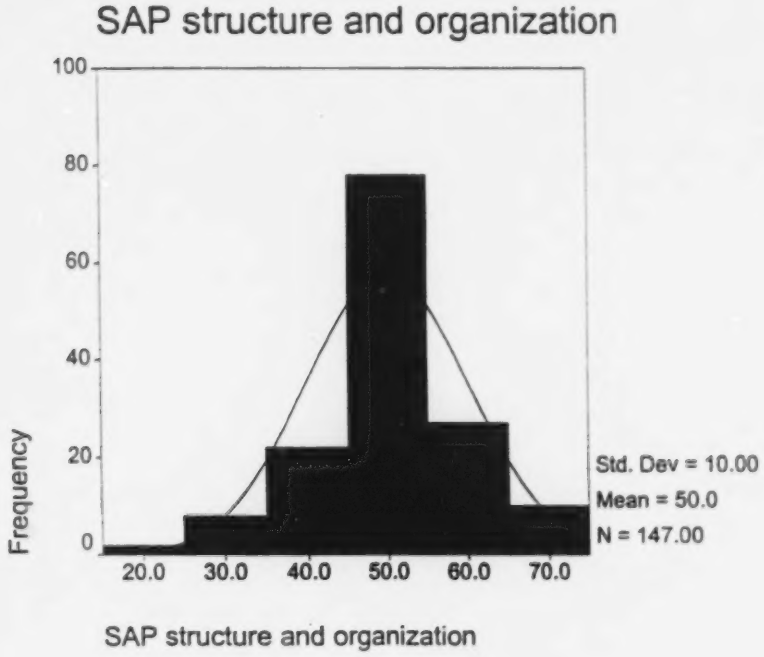
50.0
60.0
70.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
SAP coordinator for the bldg


Policy violations/consequences for alcohol,
80
60
40
20
0
Frequency
10.0
20.0
30.0
40.0
50.0
60.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 146.00
Policy violations/consequences for alcohol, drugs, violence...


SAP structure and organization
100
80
60
40
20
0
Frequency
20.0
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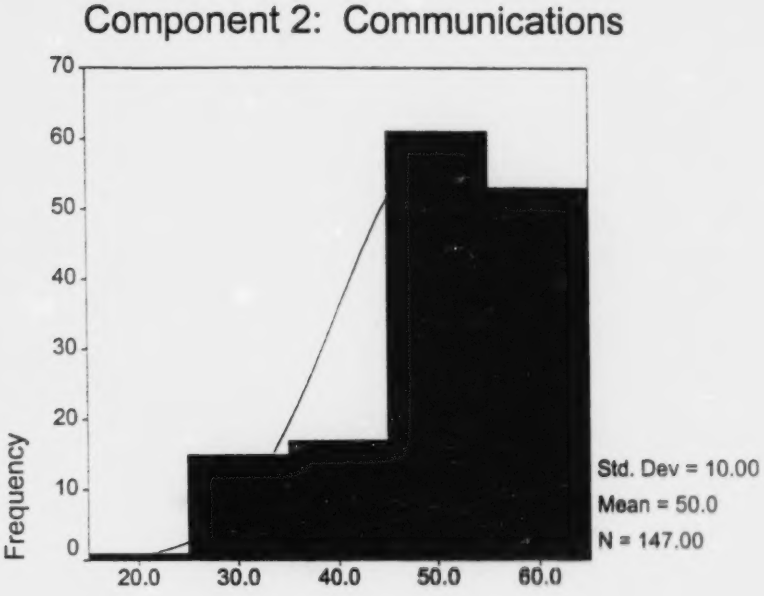
40.0
50.0
60.0
70.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
SAP structure and organization



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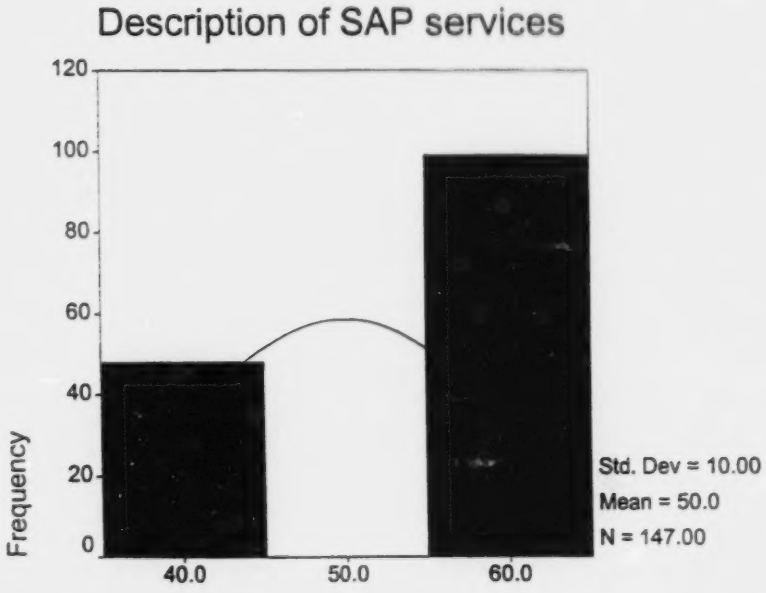

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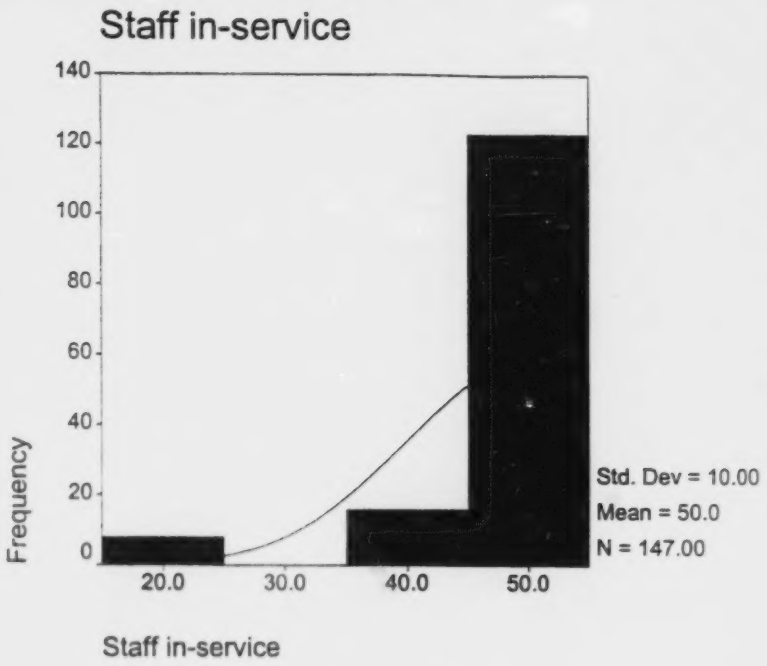
Staff in-service
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120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Frequency
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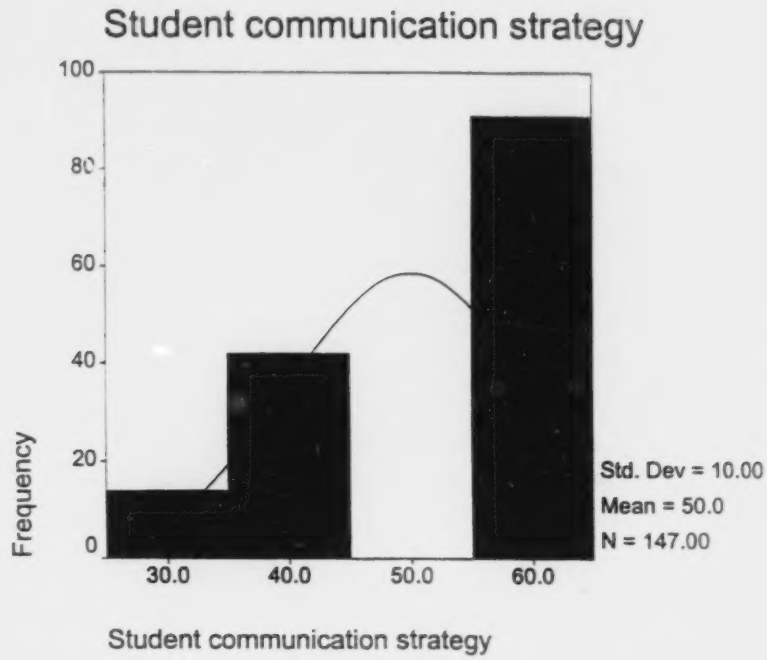
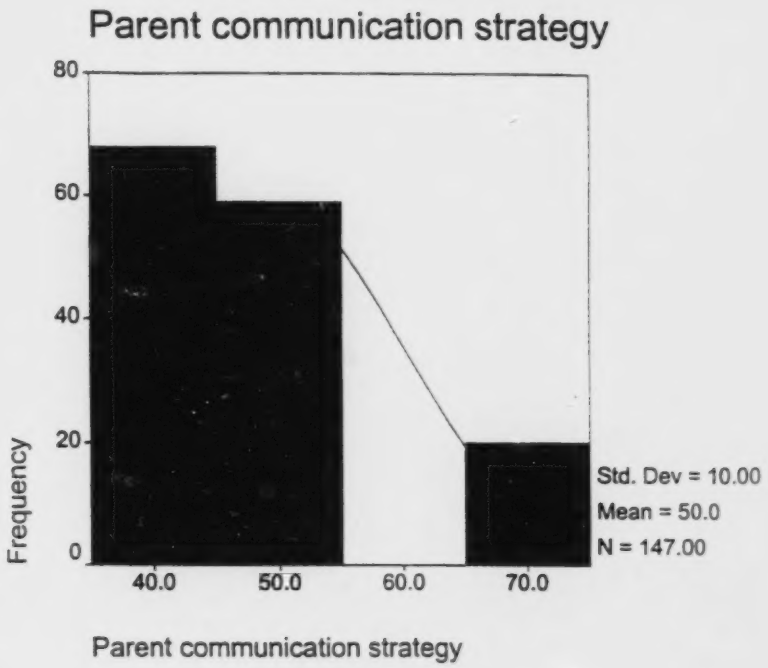
30.0
40.0
50.0
Staff in-service
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00


Student communication strategy
100
80
60
40
20
0
Frequency
30.0
40.0
50.0
60.0
Student communication strategy
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00


Parent communication strategy
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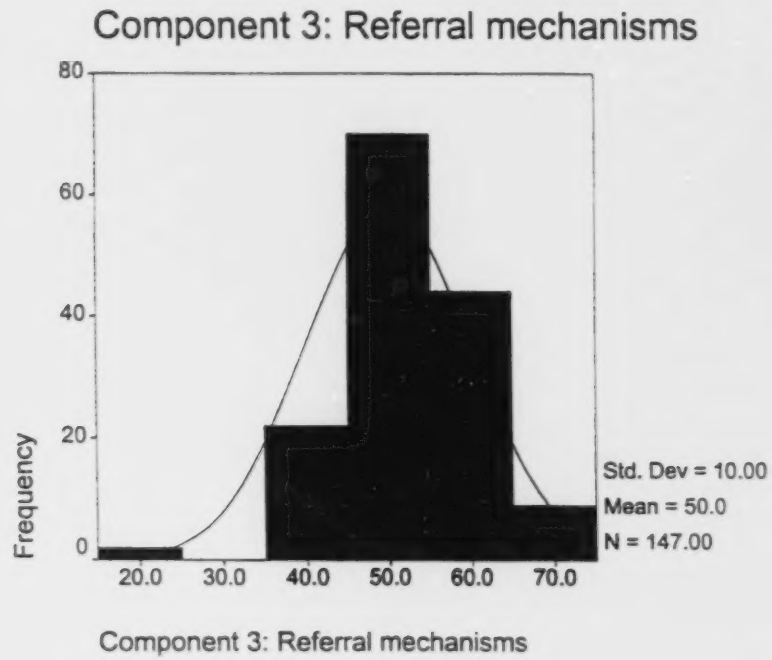
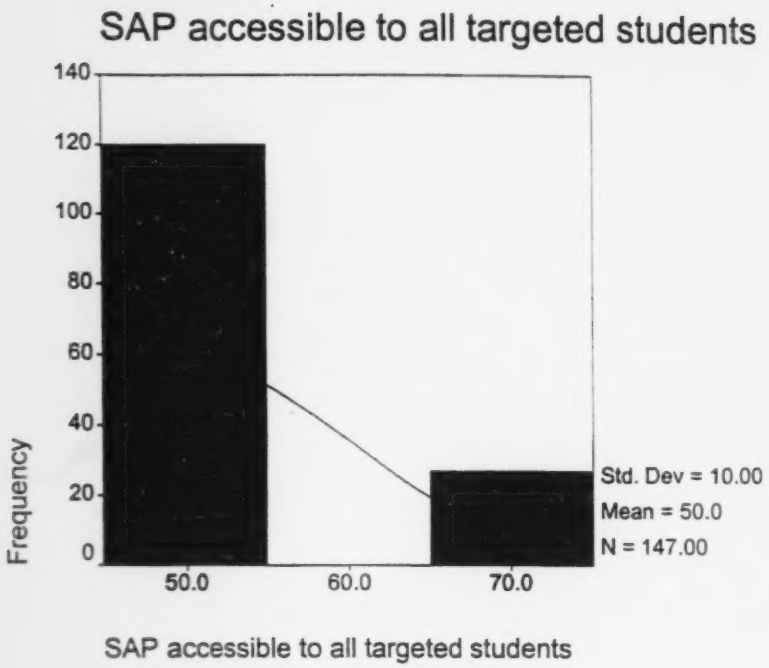
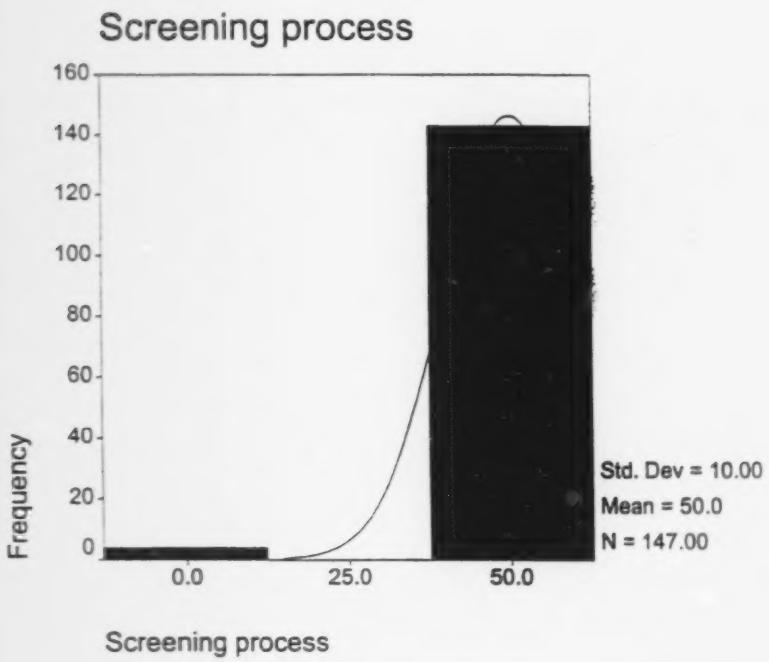
60
40
20
0
Frequency
40.0
50.0
60.0
70.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
Parent communication strategy


Component 3: Referral mechanisms
80
60
40
20
0
Frequency
20.0
30.0
40.0
50.0
60.0
70.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
Component 3: Referral mechanisms


SAP accessible to all targeted students
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Frequency
50.0
60.0
70.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
SAP accessible to all targeted students


Screening process
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140
120
100
80
60
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20
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Frequency
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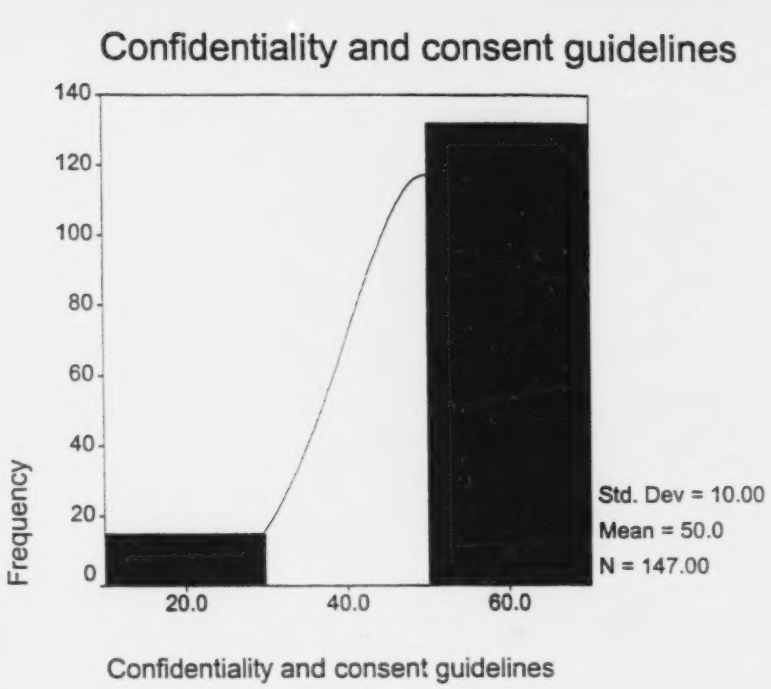
25.0
50.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
Screening process


Confidentiality and consent guidelines
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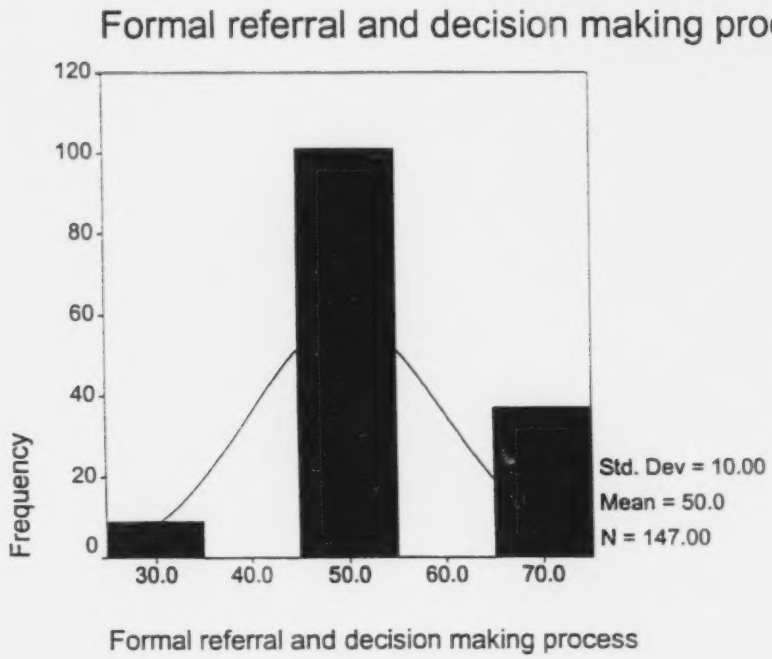
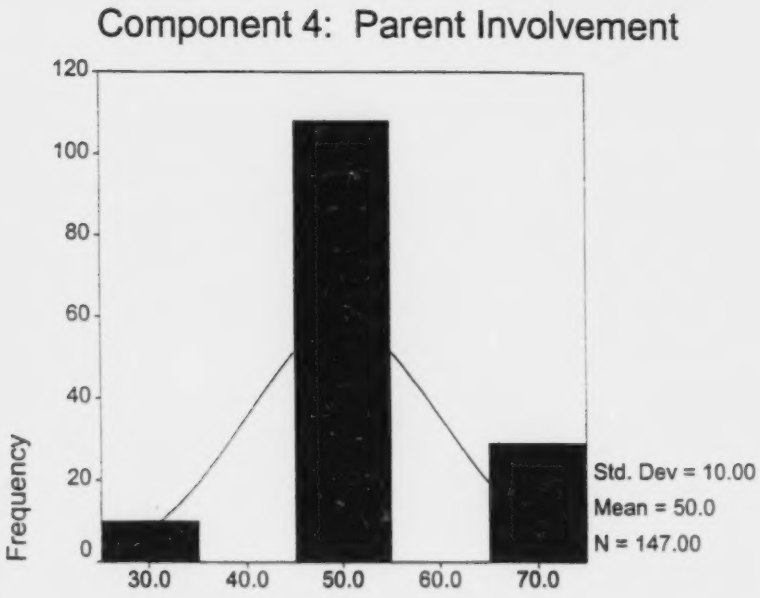
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Frequency
20.0
40.0
60.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
Confidentiality and consent guidelines


Formal referral and decision making proce
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Frequency
30.0
40.0
50.0
60.0
70.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
Formal referral and decision making process


Component 4: Parent Involvement
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60
40
20
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Frequency
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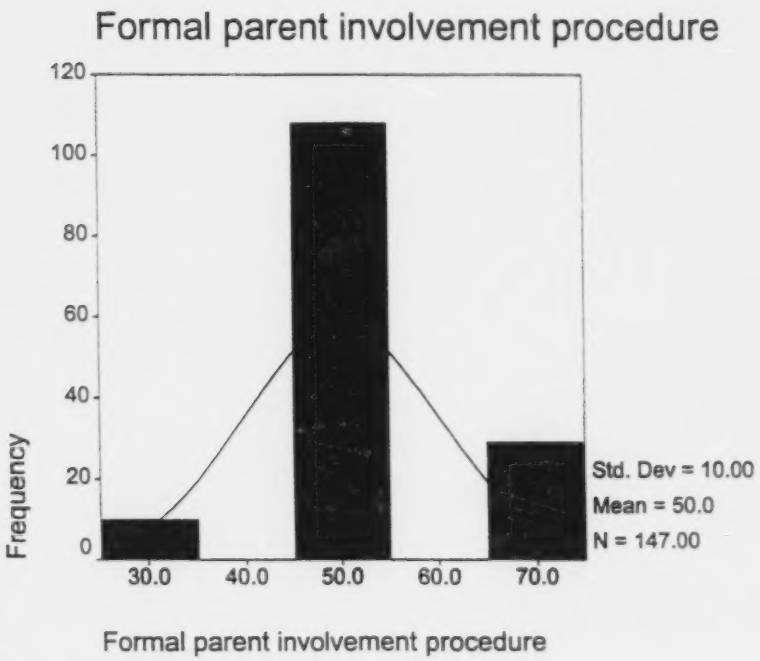
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
Component 4: Parent Involvement


Formal parent involvement procedure
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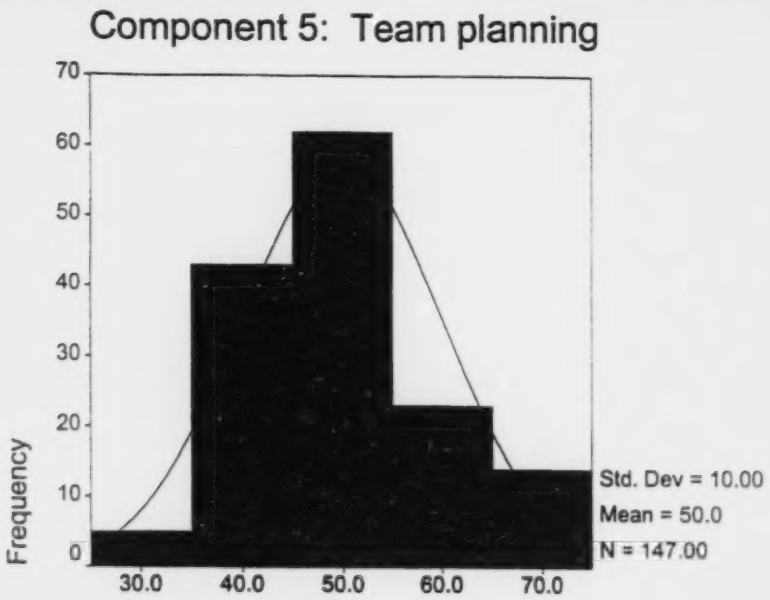
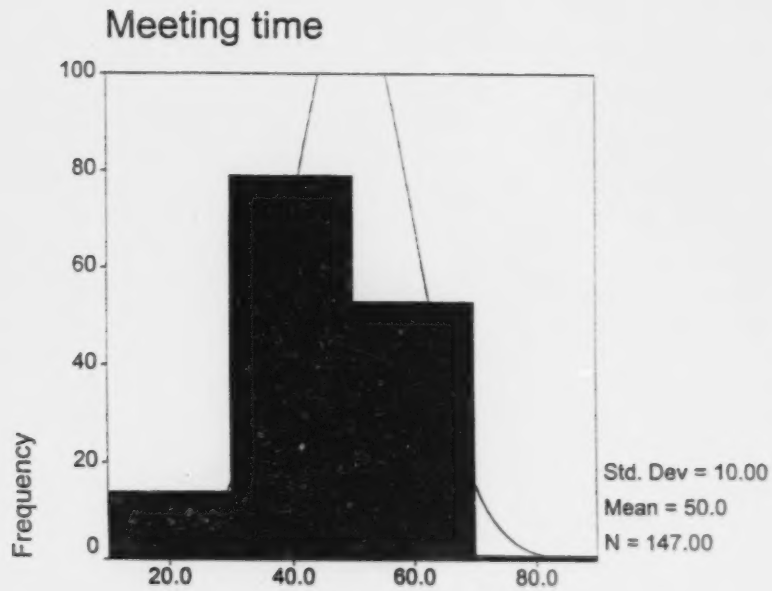
80
60
40
20
0
Frequency
30.0
40.0
50.0
60.0
70.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
Formal parent involvement procedure

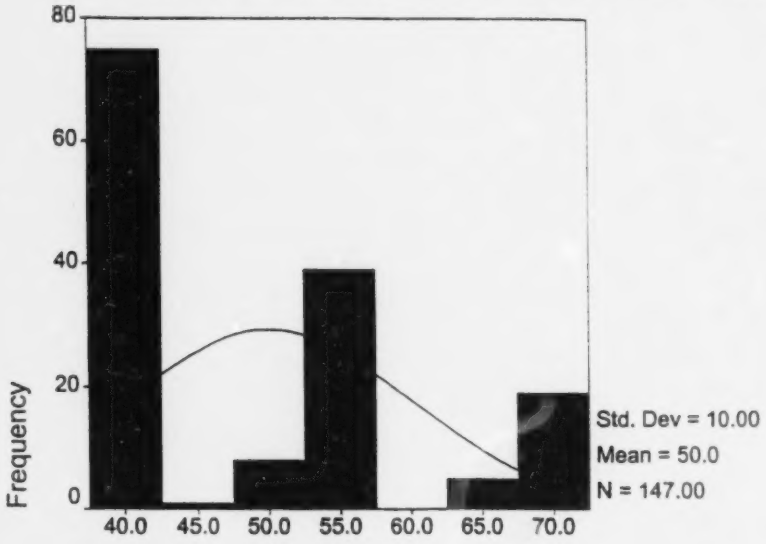


Component 5: Team planning



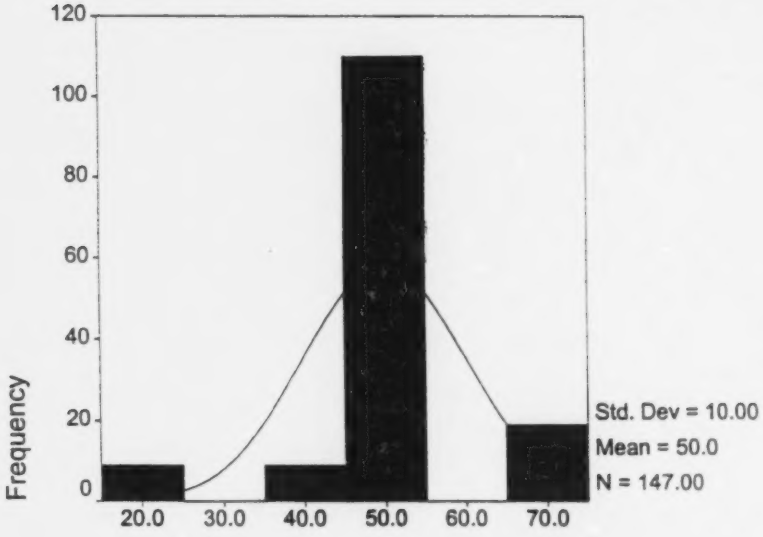
Meeting time

Member role assignments/responsibilites

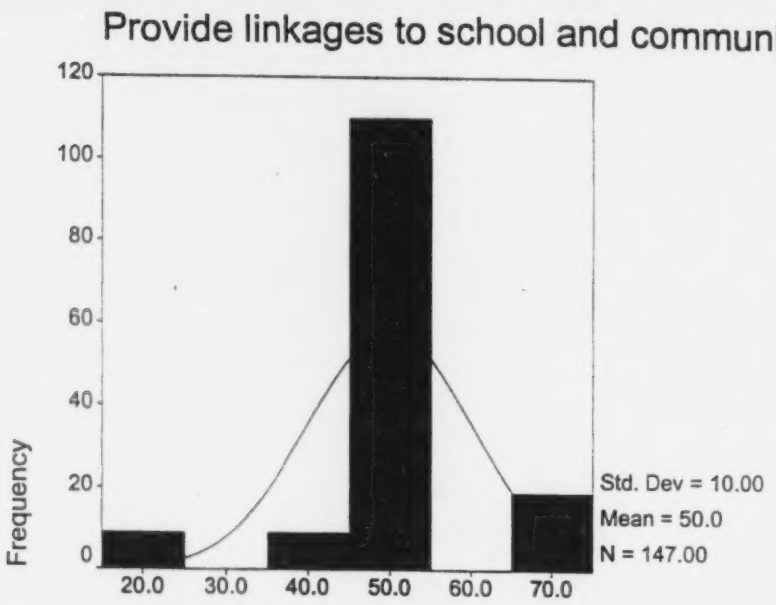


Member role assignments/responsibilites

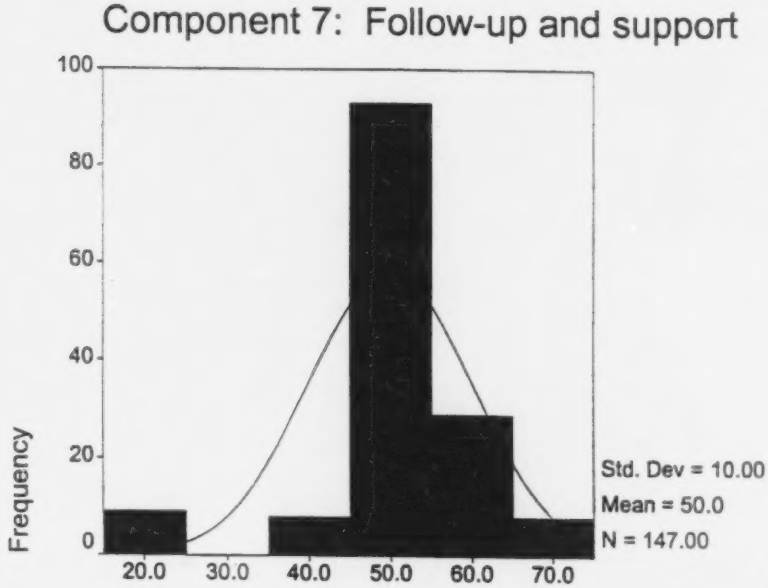
Component 6: Intervention & recommend



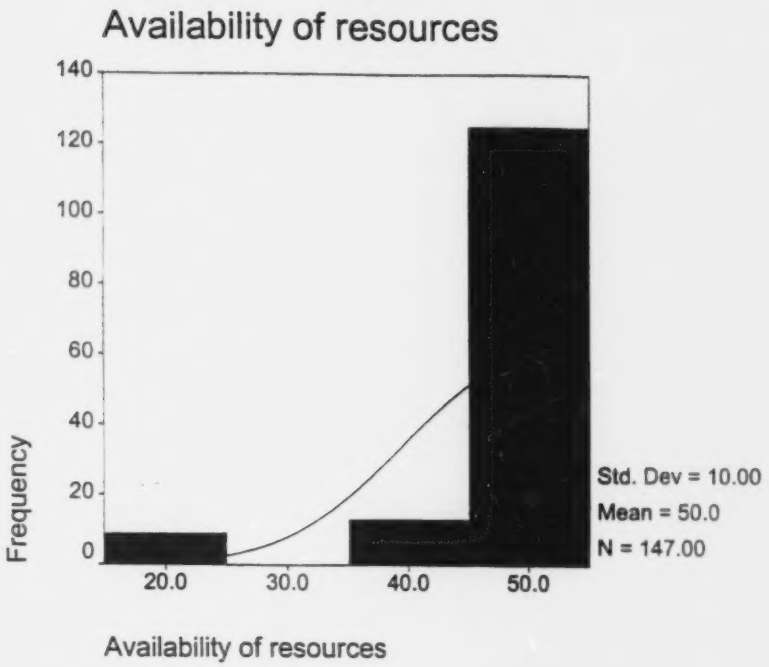
Component 6: Intervention & recommendations



Provide linkages to school and community resources



Component 7: Follow-up and support


Availability of resources
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80
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Frequency
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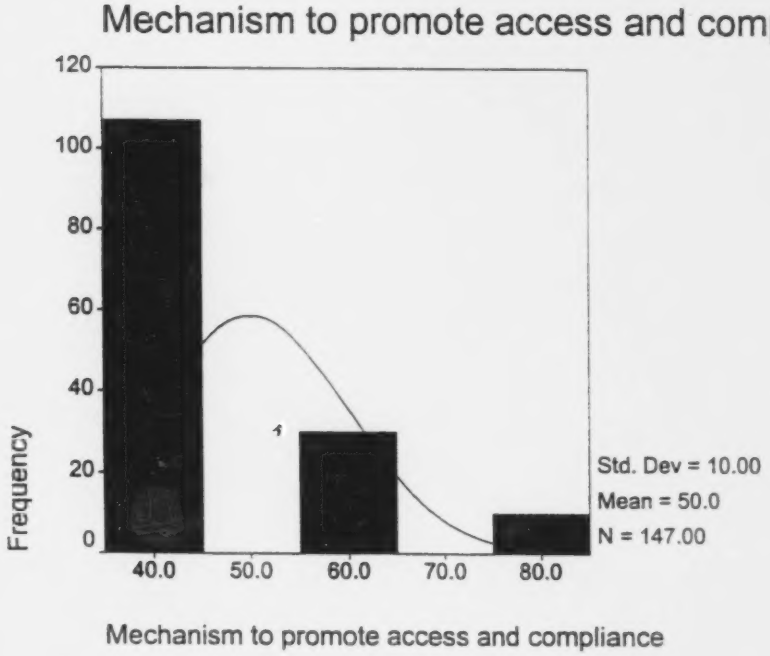
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
Availability of resources


Mechanism to promote access and compli
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Frequency
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Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
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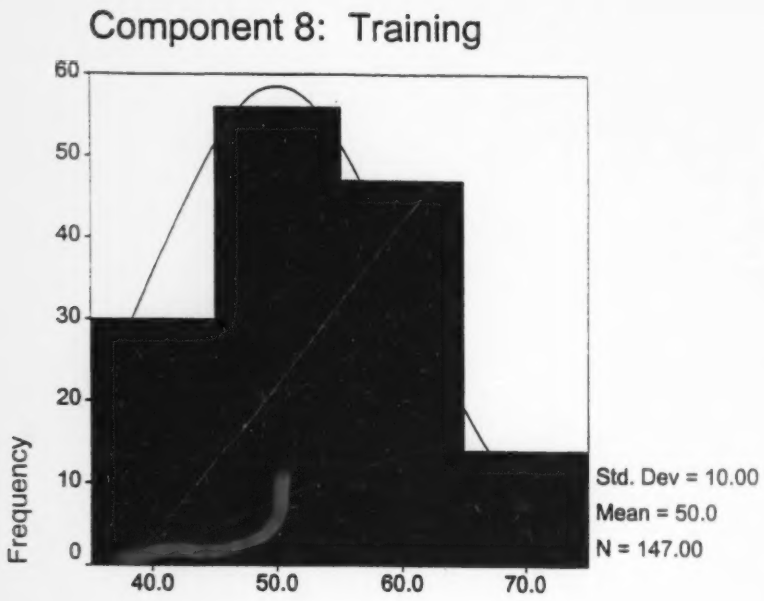
Mechanism to promote access and compliance


Component 8: Training
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30
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Frequency
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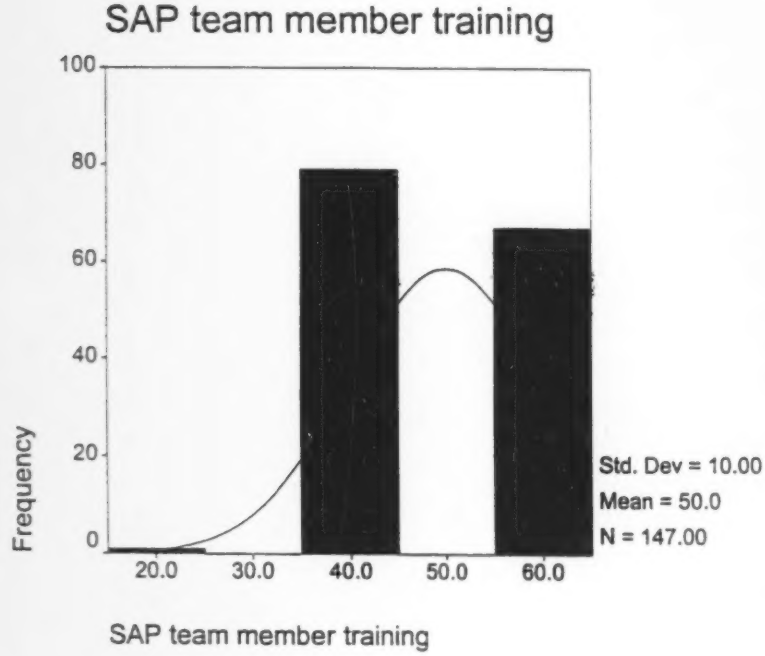
50.0
60.0
70.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
Component 8: Training


SAP team member training
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80
60
40
20
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Frequency
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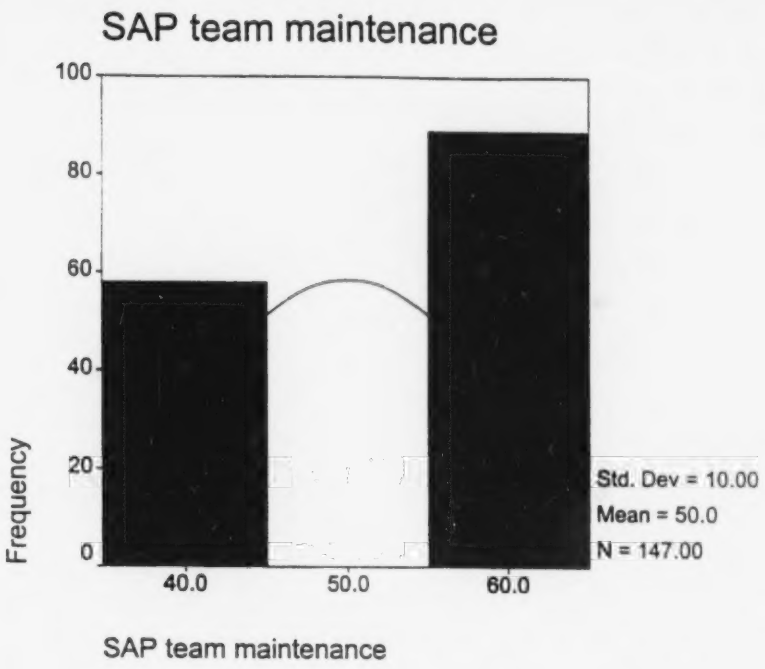
30.0
40.0
50.0
60.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
SAP team member training


SAP team maintenance
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60
40
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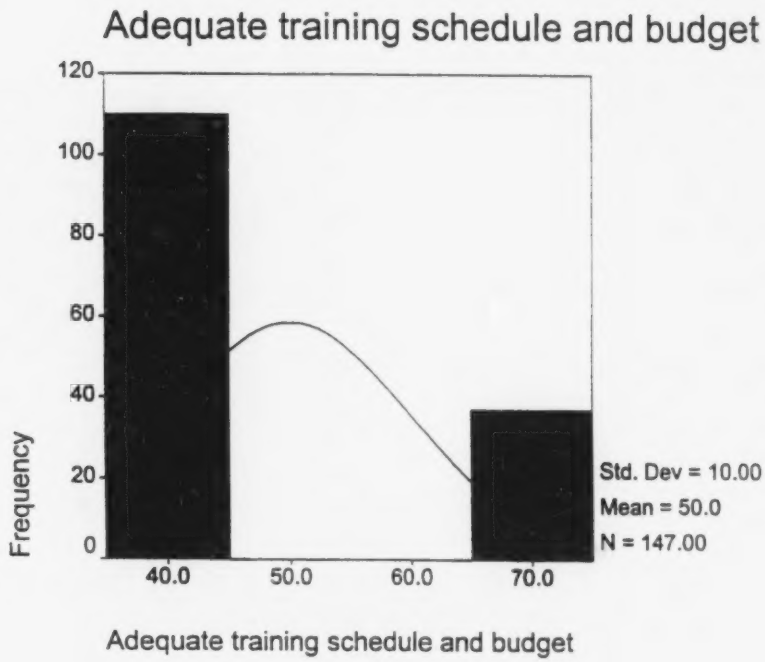
Frequency
40.0
50.0
60.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
SAP team maintenance


Adequate training schedule and budget
120
100
80
60
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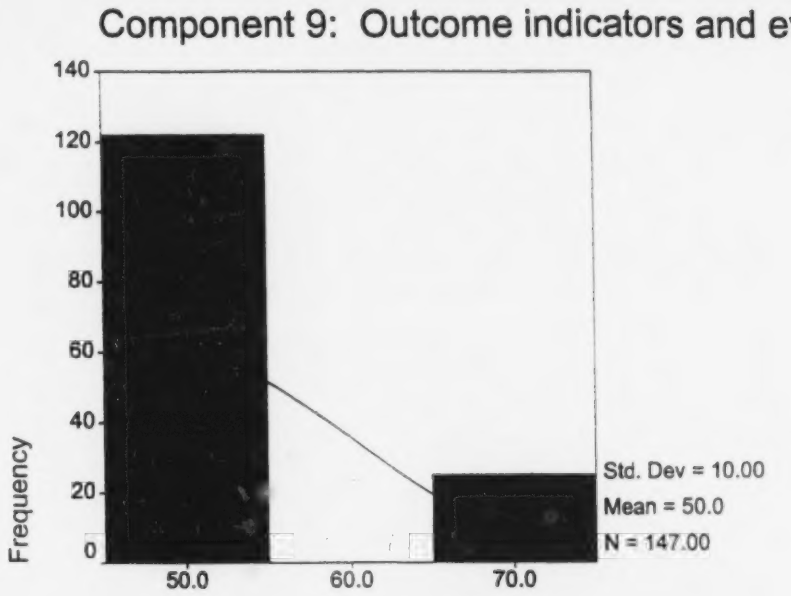
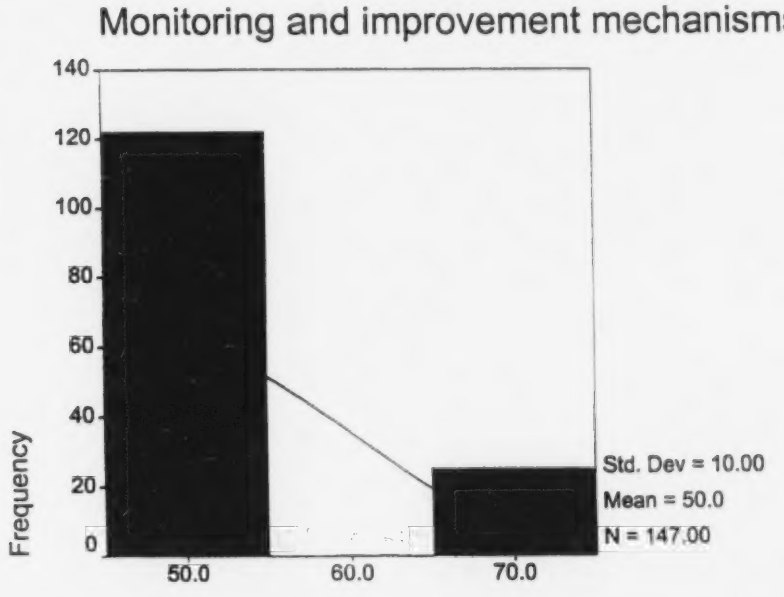
Frequency
40.0
50.0
60.0
70.0
Std. Dev = 10.00
Mean = 50.0
N = 147.00
Adequate training schedule and budget



Component 9: Outcome indicators and evaluation

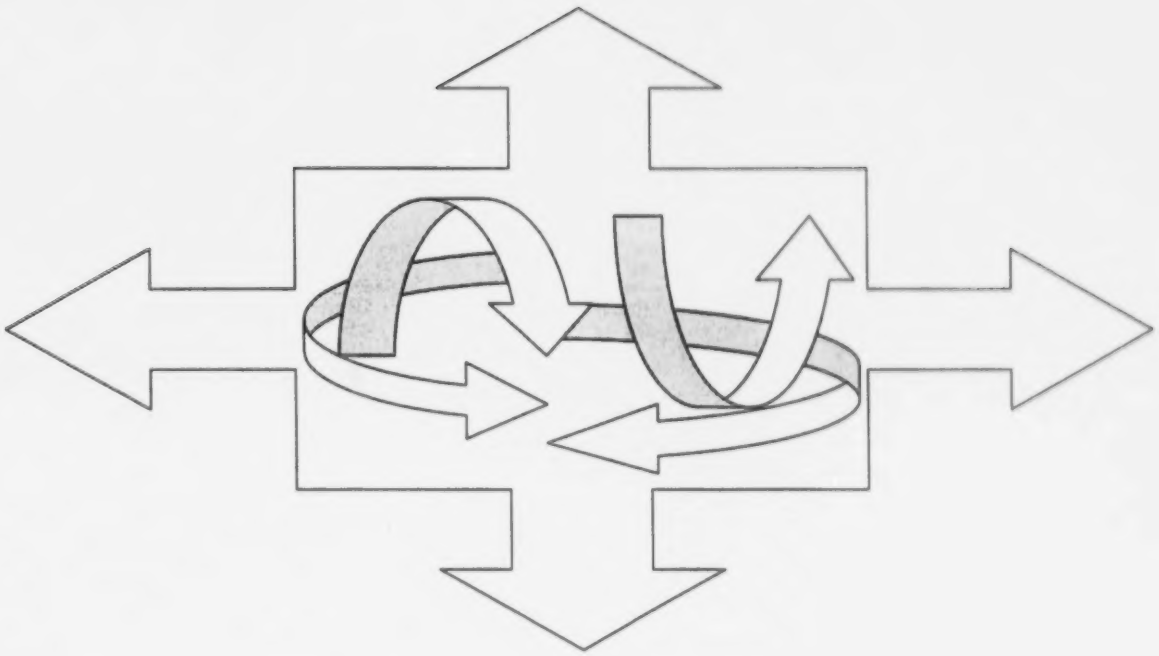


Monitoring and improvement mechanisms

APPENDIX B

The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program Components and Indicators Handbook

PENNSYLVANIA STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND INDICATORS HANDBOOK



PREPARED FOR THE PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON

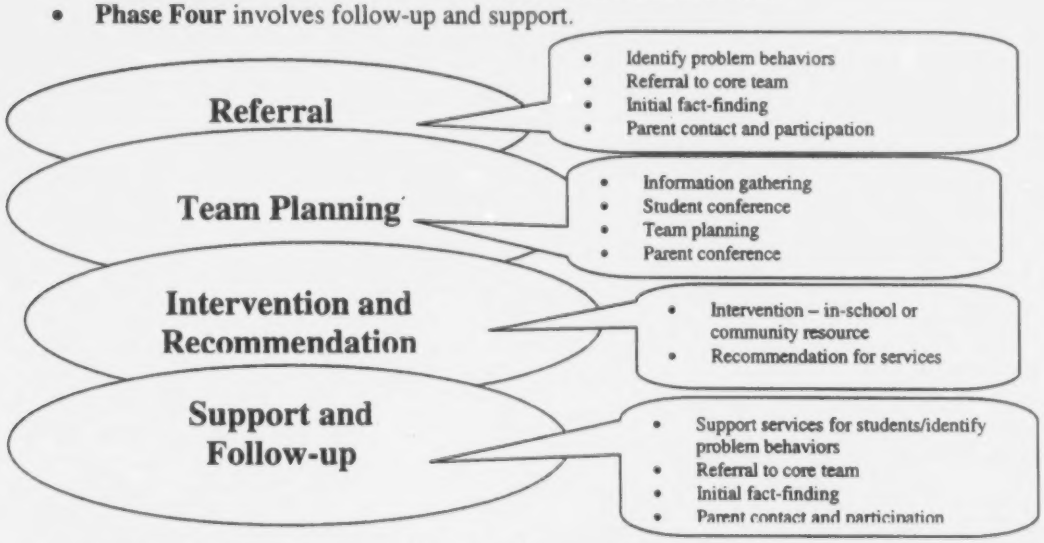
CRIME AND DELINQUENCY, SEPEMBER 2000

The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program
Components and Indicators

The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program (SAP) ensures that students experiencing barriers to learning related to substance abuse and mental health problems are identified and linked to appropriate supportive services in the school and community. This booklet highlights the results of the Pennsylvania Student Assistance Evaluation Project. The project focused on the best SAP practices. Nine essential components of SAP practice were delineated: Policy and Procedures, Communications, Referral Mechanisms, Parent Participation, Team Planning, Intervention and Recommendations, Follow-up and Support, Training, Outcome Indicators and Evaluation. For each component area there are specific performance indicators. The component areas and their corresponding performance indicators were derived from a review of SAP literature, key informant interviews, discussions and focus groups. A number of the performance indicators were validated through cross-analysis with existing SAP databases. The components have their roots in the Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program Model which is comprised of the following four phases.

Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program Model

- **Phase One** involves referral.
- **Phase Two** involves team planning.
- **Phase Three** includes team interventions and recommendations.
- **Phase Four** involves follow-up and support.



The goal of the components and indicators is to support and involve all SAP stakeholders in continuous improvement of SAP. Presented in the booklet are the SAP Component Areas and Indicators, Component Indicator Checklist, Strategies for using the Checklist, and how to develop benchmarks for your SAP.

SAP Component Areas and Indicators

(The indicators in bold have been validated through research)

Component 1. Policy and Procedures

- **Building administrators are involved and support SAP**
- **Drug and Alcohol and Mental Health SAP liaison works with team**
- **SAP Coordinator for the Building**
- **Policy violations and consequences for alcohol, drugs, involving weapons, tobacco**
- **SAP Structure and organization (including members and titles, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, meeting times, membership selection criteria, etc.)**

Component 2. Communications

- **Description of SAP Services for faculty, students and others including handbooks, brochures, etc.**
- **In-services for teachers, pupil personnel, support staff, and administrators provide time and support for SAP informational updates**
- **Specific student communication strategy**
- **Specific parent communication strategy**

Component 3. Referral Mechanisms

- **SAP is accessible to all targeted students**
- **Formal referral procedures and decision-making process**
- **Screening process includes clear and consistent student data collection and review procedures**
- **Confidentiality guidelines for team are well delineated with members demonstrating respect for and understanding of parents' and student's privacy rights**
- Cases are continuously monitored

Component 4. Parent Participation

- **Formal parent involvement procedure**
- Policy statement defining parents/guardians as decision makers who provide active consent and includes a formal parent involvement and satisfaction procedure
- Confidentiality guidelines known and respected
- Demonstration of respect for parent and family privacy rights
- Clear and consistent parent consent process and procedures
- Information release form process and procedures for consent to exchange confidential student information

Component 5. Team Planning

- **Regular meeting time sufficient to complete SAP work**
- **Members' role assignments and responsibilities articulated (e.g. leaders, secretary, case manager)**
- Case assignment and management procedures
- Regular meeting space with access to telephone
- Inter-team communication system

Component 6. Intervention and Recommendations

- **Support and provide linkages for students and parents to access school and community services**
- Team monitors and receives feedback on school and community assessments
- Continuous monitoring of student progress, parent involvement and recommendations
- Written guidelines for dealing with problems that are beyond the scope of the school's responsibility (e.g. provision of treatment, suicidal assessment)
- Written information available on school and community resources, services, and options

Component 7. Follow-up and Support

- **Procedures promote student access to and compliance with school and community services and treatment recommendations**
- **School resources are available and accessible**
- Student follow-up procedure and process promotes student contact and support
- Community resources are available and accessible
- Continuous monitoring of student progress, parent involvement and treatment recommendations compliance

Component 8. Training

- **Team members participate in all Commonwealth Approved Training**
- **Team members participate in a maintenance and development training program**
- **Team has adequate training schedule and budget**
- Team members have opportunity and support for advanced SAP training
- School and community agency staff participate in ongoing SAP training

Component 9. Outcome Indicators and Evaluation

- **SAP monitoring and improvement mechanisms are in place**
- SAP team maintains a student data management system to track student attendance, GPA, failed courses, grade retention, and school leaving
- Student SAP service participation and utilization system provides accurate and timely information
- Student interventions, recommendations, and outcomes are regularly assessed for quality and goal attainment
- Stakeholder input and suggestions are solicited and utilized
- SAP satisfaction information is solicited and utilized

Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program

Component Indicator Checklist

Purpose

The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program Component Indicator Checklist is designed to help you determine those elements of your SAP program in which your SAP program is the strongest and those in which your SAP program is in need development. Furthermore, through utilization of the various strategies discussed in this handbook, schools can develop their individual SAP benchmarks for each indicator.

Importance

Accurate diagnosis and feedback is an important first step in development. The Checklist feedback you receive will help you and your school benefit from your SAP program's strengths and target developmental activities to address your SAP program's specific developmental needs.

Instructions for Completing the Checklist

1. Be sure you fill in all of the boxes at the top of the next page.
2. This checklist consists of 46 items that represent the essential SAP components. Read each item carefully and consider as it pertains to your SAP program.
3. To the right of the items rate your SAP program's current performance by circling the appropriate number. Complete the rating using the scale: 1= Never Present, 2 = Sometimes Present, 3 = Present All Of The Time.

Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program

Effectiveness Checklist

Member name	Date
Building	District

Instructions: Please rate each SAP component indicator for your SAP by using the following scale:
1: = Never Present **2:** = Sometimes Present **3:** = Present All Of The Time

Component 1 Policy and Procedures

Building administrators are involved and support SAP	1	2	3	
Drug and Alcohol and Mental Health SAP liaison works with team	1	2	3	
SAP Coordinator for the Building	1	2	3	
Policy violations and consequences for alcohol, drugs, involving weapons, tobacco	1	2	3	
SAP Structure and organization (including members and titles, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, meeting times, membership selection criteria, etc.)	1	2	3	Total

Component 2 Communications

Description of SAP Services for faculty, students and others including handbooks, brochures, etc.	1	2	3	
In-services for teachers, pupil personnel, support staff, and administrators provide time and support for SAP informational updates	1	2	3	
Specific student communication strategy	1	2	3	
Specific parent communication strategy	1	2	3	Total

Component 3 Referral Mechanisms

SAP is accessible to all targeted students	1	2	3	
Formal referral procedures and decision-making process	1	2	3	
Screening process includes clear and consistent student data collection and review procedures	1	2	3	
Confidentiality guidelines for team are well delineated with members demonstrating respect for and understanding of parents' and students' privacy rights	1	2	3	
Cases are continuously monitored	1	2	3	Total

Component 4 Parent Participation

Formal parent involvement procedure	1	2	3	
Policy statement defining parents/guardians as decision makers who provide active consent and includes a formal parent involvement and satisfaction procedure	1	2	3	
Confidentiality guidelines known and respected	1	2	3	
Demonstration of respect for parent and family privacy rights	1	2	3	
Clear and consistent parent consent process and procedures	1	2	3	
Information release form process and procedures for consent to exchange confidential student information	1	2	3	Total

Component 5 Team Planning

Regular meeting time sufficient to complete SAP work	1	2	3	
Members' roles and responsibilities are articulated (e.g. leaders, secretary, case manager)	1	2	3	
Case assignment and management procedures	1	2	3	
Regular meeting space with access to telephone	1	2	3	
Inter-team communication system	1	2	3	Total

Component 6 Intervention and Recommendations

Support and provide linkages for students and parents to access school and community services	1	2	3	
Team monitors and receives feedback on school and community assessments	1	2	3	
Continuous monitoring of student progress, parent involvement and recommendations	1	2	3	
Written guidelines for dealing with problems that are beyond the scope of the school's responsibility (e.g. provision of treatment, suicidal assessment)	1	2	3	
Written information available on community resources, services, and other options	1	2	3	Total

Component 7 Follow-up and Support

Procedures promote student access to and compliance with school and community services and treatment recommendations	1	2	3	
School resources are available and accessible	1	2	3	
Student follow-up procedure and process promotes student contact and support	1	2	3	
Community resources are available and accessible	1	2	3	
Continuous monitoring of student progress, parent involvement and treatment recommendations compliance	1	2	3	Total

Component 8 Training

Team members participate in all Commonwealth Approved training	1	2	3	
Team members participate in a maintenance and development training program	1	2	3	
Team has adequate training schedule and budget	1	2	3	
Team members have opportunity and support for advanced SAP training	1	2	3	
School and community agency staff participate in ongoing SAP training	1	2	3	Total

Component 9 Outcome Indicators and Evaluation

SAP monitoring and improvement mechanisms are in place	1	2	3	
SAP team maintains a student data management system to track student attendance, GPA, failed courses, grade retention, and school leaving	1	2	3	
Student SAP service participation and utilization system provides accurate and timely information	1	2	3	
Student interventions, recommendations, and outcomes are regularly assessed for quality and goal attainment	1	2	3	
Stakeholder input and suggestions are solicited and utilized	1	2	3	
SAP satisfaction information is solicited and utilized	1	2	3	Total

Strategies For Using The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program Component Indicator Checklist

Any strategic application of the component indicators should take into account all of the individuals and/or groups who may be stakeholders in the student assistance program. The component areas and indicators involve many of the different stakeholders such as parents, students, administrators, faculty, team members, community agencies etc. One helpful mechanism for applying the components and indicators to a particular SAP might be the use of a 360 degree feedback process. This process involves getting input and feedback from all different levels of stakeholders, those both internal and external to your program.

In a 360 degree process all individuals and groups who participate or benefit from your SAP program are asked for their perceptions of how your SAP is working. A 360 degree process involves not only getting feedback from those who receive service from your program such as administrators, faculty, parents and students but also those who provide service such as treatment agencies, community resources and the SAP members themselves. Because of the subjective nature of the feedback given, this process is not useful in determining the need for or the continuation of your program but, rather, in examining perceptions, trends and program improvement issues. 360 degree processes can open up communication with parents, students and within the team itself and can provide a mechanism for ongoing involvement by using the information gathered to formulate an action improvement plan.

The following steps can be helpful in implementing a 360 degree feedback process for a student assistance program.

- Identify the stakeholders in SAP
- Using the components and indicators, identify the information you want to gather from each of your stakeholders; for example, in gathering information from parents you might want to focus on the indicators of access, confidentiality, perceptions of outcomes, and so forth.
- Provide a component area and indicators checklist for each of the stakeholders to complete. (Different stakeholders may require different checklists to be able to gather the most pertinent information)
- Process the information received. If desired, develop a rating system to summarize overall trends, findings and overall perceptions between and among different stakeholders
- Develop an action improvement plan based on the feedback given, making sure that feedback is provided to each of the stakeholder groups/individuals.

The following ten strategies are specific ideas for gathering information from different stakeholders both internal and external to your system to assist in instituting a 360 degree feedback and improvement process.

Strategy One: Individual team members, working independently, define what their teams' current practice is for each component and corresponding indicators. Use the Checklist to assess current practice levels. Gather supporting documentation for current practice.

Strategy Two: Team members of a single building meet individually and jointly to assess the team's SAP practices. Responses are compared and contrasted. Plan of action with specific tasks, responsibilities and timeline is developed to improve the SAP practice.

Strategy Three: Teams within a single school district convene to share team assessment and action plans. Drawn from the teams' assessments and plans is a district SAP practice improvement strategy and plan.

Strategy Four: School districts within a region convene to share school assessment and action plans. Drawn from the schools' assessments and plans is a regional SAP practice improvement strategy and plan.

Strategy Five: County mental health and drug and alcohol program administrators and community agency staff (SAP liaisons as well as other county and agency staff) use the benchmarks and indicators to map their current SAP practice. SAP practice improvement strategies and plans can be developed from the point of view of the county administration, all agencies in a county, and individual agencies. Furthermore, agencies and programs not directly involved with SAP but complementary and collaborative can be included; for example, Child, Youth and Family and Boys and Girls Clubs.

Strategy Six: Parents and members of the district Safe and Drug Free School advisory committee convene to assess SAP practice within a district. The Checklist can also be used to guide discussion and provide information about how SAP is practiced in the district and in a specific school building.

Strategy Seven: School staff and members of the district Safe and Drug Free School advisory committee convene to assess SAP practice within a district. The Checklist can be used to guide discussion and provide information about how SAP is practiced in the district and in a specific school building.

Strategy Eight: Students, with their families and teachers, use the Checklist to assess how their needs are being met by SAP practice.

Strategy Nine: State wide organizations and groups (State government, PASAP, CASSP) can use aggregated data from individual schools, that have differing needs, to better understand the challenges and opportunities facing SAP practice at the local and state level.

Strategy Ten: Individual groups of SAP stakeholders (teachers, liaisons, principals, counselors, school nurses) across school buildings, districts, and the state can use aggregated data from individual schools, that have differing needs, to better understand the challenges and opportunities facing their counterparts at the local and state level.

Thinking About The Strategies

- With all strategies you can take a broad focus on all the components or a concise focus on a single or group of component indicators.

- High performance doesn't mean that all components and indicators are present at a particular level. High performance is defined by individual teams and programs and reflects a unique blend of component and indicator levels.

- The profile of a SAP's components and indicators is expected to change over time. They are dynamic. A SAP may find that certain components and indicators have priorities related to the developmental stage of their SAP program. For example, a new or struggling program might place priorities on Component 1 Policy and Procedures and Component 3 Referral Mechanisms. While an established and well supported SAP program may prioritize Component 8 Training.

- The level of SAP knowledge and experience with any given component indicator can vary among similar stakeholders. Likewise, expect rating variations among team members with different SAP roles and responsibilities. The rating variations can provide valuable insights into the SAP functioning and process.

- In some situations, a stakeholder might elect not to rate a particular indicator (unscored indicators). It is recommended to note unscored indicators in reporting and tallying of the Checklist.

Developing Benchmarks For Your SAP

The 360 degree feedback process is designed to contribute to continuous SAP improvement. Using the process each SAP can establish their own unique Benchmarks to guide their program's development.

Benchmarks help organizations and individuals to excel. Tucker and Codding (1998) define benchmarking as "The disciplined search for best practices" (p. 313). Ammons (1996) defines benchmarks as "the identification of best-in-class performers, the comparison of local performance outputs and results with those of top performers, the analysis of practices that account for any performance gaps, and the development and implementation of strategies to adjust the performance gap in one's favor" (p. 286). The American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC, 2000) defines benchmark as a measured "best in class" achievement; a reference or measurement standard for comparison; this performance level is recognized as the standard of excellence for a specific organizational process.

Once benchmarks have been established, an organization or individual may adopt procedures or techniques used by other organizations that they believe will be effective in their own circumstances. Fine and Snyder (1999) point out that the benchmarking process is ongoing. Fine and Snyder argue "In order to determine whether new techniques are working to achieve the desired benchmarks of service, organizations involved in benchmarking efforts must return to their performance indicators and measure the success of their work" (p. 24). If the results are not satisfactory, other benchmarks may be chosen. According to O'Dell (1996), benchmarking clearly represents the process of organizational learning.

Using Benchmarks In Education

The use of benchmarks in education is widespread and includes concepts of educational indicators and standards for students, teachers, services, programs, and schools. In all situations, the development and use of benchmarks focus on best practices. This search for best practices entails the identification of organizations, programs, and individuals that excels in its area of operation or practice, establishing what it is that allows it to excel, and ascertaining how to adapt those practices to other settings. APQR (2000) cautions organizations that "there is no single 'best practice' because best is not best for everyone. Every organization is different in some way – different missions, cultures, environments and technologies. What is meant by "best" is those practices that have been shown to produce superior results; selected by a systematic process; and

judged as exemplary, good or successfully demonstrated. Best practices are then adjusted to fit a particular organization."

The framework for the development of benchmarks has its roots in the work of Donabedian's (1980). His approach to understanding organizations and programs looks at structure, process, and outcomes. Using the framework benchmarks and indicators are developed and grouped according to their focus. For example, structural benchmarks would focus on school characteristics (e.g. school type, location, size), process benchmarks would focus on program operations (e.g. SAP) and outcome benchmarks would focus on participants (e.g. student behavior, academic achievement). Bottani and Tuijman (1994) discuss the construction of an educational indicator framework that will "provide information about the condition, the stability or change, the functioning, or the performance of an educational system or a part thereof. Education indicators may point to—or index—a certain aspect of the condition, functioning, or performance of an educational system, but they are not the phenomenon itself" (p. 48). Sirotnik and Kimball (1999) have focused on assessment and accountability. Their work on content standards provides guidance for developing educational benchmarks and indicators. Using their work the following benchmark development guidelines are proposed.

- The benchmarks must evaluate each school and program in terms of its own context as well as in comparison to other schools and programs.
- A single indicator must not drive the benchmarks (e.g. SAP referral rate, test scores, grades).
- The benchmarks must promote equitable and substantial opportunities for learning, support and services for all students.
- The benchmarks must be flexible enough to account for individual differences in schools.
- The benchmarks must promote substantial, long-term professional development for teachers and administrators.
- The benchmarks must not be punitive, either to students or to teachers and schools.
- The public and the political infrastructure must support the benchmarks.

In order to establish benchmarks that are meaningful to a specific SAP, each program must develop an individually tailored action plan associated with each component and indicator. The plan should be developed utilizing information gathered from the SAP's reporting and monitoring data, the team member checklist and feedback from various stakeholders. The improvement process should include an assessment of the current situation, performance goals (benchmarks), mechanisms for measuring success and specific strategies for goal achievement.

Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program: Performance Improvement Plan

(Use the data gathered from the component and indicator checklist to develop an action plan)

Member name	Date
Building	District

Component 1 Policy and Procedures

	PERFORMANCE (Select a rating for each indicator)			Performance Goal	Indicators or Measurement of Goal Achievement	Strategies for Achieving Goals	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Target Date for Completion	Outcome	How do other SAPs achieve this goal
	Exemplary	Adequate	Inadequate								
Building administrators are involved and support SAP											
Drug and Alcohol and Mental Health SAP liaisons works with team											
SAP Coordinator for the building											
Policy violations and consequences for alcohol, drugs, involving weapons, tobacco											
SAP Structure and organization (including members and titles, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, meeting times, membership selection criteria, etc											

Component 2 Communications

	PERFORMANCE (Select a rating for each indicator)			Performance Goal	Indicators or Measurement of Goal Achievement	Strategies for Achieving Goals	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Target Date for Completion	Outcome	How do other SAPs achieve this goal
	Exemplary	Adequate	Inadequate								
Description of SAP Services for faculty, students and others including handbooks, brochures, etc.											
In-services for teachers, pupil personnel, support staff, and administrators provide time and support for SAP informational updates											
Specific student communication strategy											
Specific parent communication strategy											

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Component 3 Referral Mechanisms

	PERFORMANCE (Select a rating for each indicator)			Performance Goal	Indicators or Measurement of Goal Achievement	Strategies for Achieving Goals	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Target Date for Completion	Outcome	How do other SAPs achieve this goal
	Exemplary	Adequate	Inadequate								
SAP is accessible to all targeted students											
Formal referral procedures and decision-making process											
Screening process includes clear and consistent student data collection and review procedures											
Confidentiality guidelines for team are well delineated; with members demonstrating respect for and understanding of privacy rights											
Cases are continually monitored											

Component 4 Parent Participation

	PERFORMANCE (Select a rating for each indicator)			Performance Goal	Indicators or Measurement of Goal Achievement	Strategies for Achieving Goals	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Target Date for Completion	Outcome	How do other SAPs achieve this goal
	Exemplary	Adequate	Inadequate								
Formal parent involvement procedure											
Policy statement defining parents/guardians as decision makers who provide active consent and includes a formal parent involvement and satisfaction procedure											
Confidentiality guidelines are known and respected											
Demonstration of respect for parent and family privacy rights											
Clear and consistent parent consent process and procedure											
Information release form process and procedure for consent to exchange confidential student information											

Component 5 Team Planning

	PERFORMANCE (Select a rating for each indicator)			Performance Goal	Indicators or Measurement of Goal Achievement	Strategies for Achieving Goals	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Target Date for Completion	Outcome	How do other SAPs achieve this goal
	Exemplary	Adequate	Inadequate								
Regular meeting times sufficient to complete SAP work											
Members' roles and responsibilities are articulated (e.g. leaders, secretary, case manager)											
Regular meeting space with access to telephone											
Case assignment and management procedures											
Inter-team communication system											

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Component 6 Interventions and Recommendations

	PERFORMANCE (Select a rating for each indicator)			Performance Goal	Indicators or Measurement of Goal Achievement	Strategies for Achieving Goals	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Target Date for Completion	Outcome	How do other SAPs achieve this goal
	Exemplary	Adequate	Inadequate								
Team monitors and receives feedback on school and community assessments											
Support and provide linkages for students and parents to access school and community services											
Continuous monitoring of student progress, parent involvement, and recommendations											
Written guidelines used for dealing with problems that are beyond the scope of the school's responsibility (e.g. provision of treatment, suicidal assessment)											
Written information available on community resources, services, and other options											

Component 7 Follow-up and Support

	PERFORMANCE (Select a rating for each indicator)			Performance Goal	Indicators or Measurement of Goal Achievement	Strategies for Achieving Goals	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Target Date for Completion	Outcome	How do other SAPs achieve this goal
	Exemplary	Adequate	Inadequate								
Student follow-up procedure and process promotes student contact and support											
School resources are available and accessible											
Community resources are available and accessible											
Procedures promote student access to, and compliance with, school and community services and treatment recommendations											
Continuous monitoring of student progress, parent involvement and treatment recommendations compliance											

Component 8 Training

	PERFORMANCE (Select a rating for each indicator)			Performance Goal	Indicators or Measurement of Goal Achievement	Strategies for Achieving Goals	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Target Date for Completion	Outcome	How do other SAPs achieve this goal
	Exemplary	Adequate	Inadequate								
Team members participate in all Commonwealth approved training											
Team members participate in a maintenance and development training program											
Team has adequate training schedule and budget											
Team members have opportunity and support for advanced SAP training											
School and community agency staff participate in ongoing SAP training											

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Component 9 Outcome Indicators and Evaluation

	PERFORMANCE (Select a rating for each indicator)			Performance Goal	Indicators or Measurement of Goal Achievement	Strategies for Achieving Goals	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Target Date for Completion	Outcome	How do other SAPs achieve this goal
	Exemplary	Adequate	Inadequate								
SAP monitoring and improvement mechanisms are in place											
SAP team maintains a student data management system to track student attendance, GPA, failed courses, grade retention, and leaving school											
Student SAP service participation and utilization system provides accurate and timely information											
Student interventions, recommendations, and outcomes are regularly assessed for quality and goal attainment											
Stakeholder input and suggestions are solicited and utilized											
SAP satisfaction information is solicited and utilized											

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SAMPLE PARENT CHECKLIST
Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program
Component Indicator Checklist

Name	Date
School	District

Instructions: Please rate each SAP component indicator for your SAP by using the following scale:
1: = Never Present **2:** = Sometimes Present **3:** = Present All Of The Time

Communications

Description of SAP Services for faculty, parents, students and others including handbooks, brochures, etc.	1	2	3
Specific parent communication strategy	1	2	3

Referral Mechanisms

SAP is accessible to all targeted students	1	2	3
Confidentiality guidelines for team are well delineated; with members demonstrating respect for and understanding of privacy rights	1	2	3

Parent Participation

Formal parent involvement procedure	1	2	3
Policy statement defining parents/guardians as decision makers who provide active consent and includes a formal parent involvement and satisfaction procedure	1	2	3
Confidentiality guidelines are known and respected	1	2	3
Demonstration of respect for parent and family privacy rights	1	2	3
Clear and consistent parent consent process and procedure	1	2	3
Information release form process and procedure for consent to exchange confidential student information	1	2	3

Intervention and Recommendations

Support and provide linkages for students and parents to access school and community services	1	2	3
Continuous monitoring of student progress, parent involvement, and recommendations	1	2	3

Follow-up and Support

Procedures promote student access to, and compliance with, school and community services and treatment recommendations	1	2	3
Continuous monitoring of student progress, parent involvement and treatment recommendations compliance	1	2	3

SAMPLE ADMINISTRATOR CHECKLIST
Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program
Component Indicator Checklist

Name	Date
School	District

Instructions: Please rate each SAP component indicator for your SAP by using the following scale:
1: = Never Present **2:** = Sometimes Present **3:** = Present All Of The Time

Policy and Procedures

Building administrators are involved and support SAP	1	2	3
Drug and Alcohol and Mental Health SAP liaisons works with team	1	2	3
SAP Coordinator for the building	1	2	3
Policy violations and consequences for alcohol, drugs, involving weapons, tobacco	1	2	3
SAP Structure and organization (including members and titles, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, meeting times, membership selection criteria, etc	1	2	3

Communications

Description of SAP Services for faculty, students and others including handbooks, brochures, etc.	1	2	3
In-services for teachers, pupil personnel, support staff, and administrators provide time and support for SAP informational updates	1	2	3

Referral Mechanisms

SAP is accessible to all targeted students	1	2	3
Formal referral procedures and decision-making process	1	2	3
Screening process includes clear and consistent student data collection and review procedures	1	2	3
Confidentiality guidelines for team are well delineated; with members demonstrating respect for and understanding of privacy rights	1	2	3
Cases are continually monitored	1	2	3

Parent Participation

Formal parent involvement procedure	1	2	3
Confidentiality guidelines are known and respected	1	2	3
Information release form process and procedure for consent to exchange confidential student information	1	2	3

Team Planning

Regular meeting times sufficient to complete SAP work	1	2	3
Members' roles and responsibilities are articulated (e.g. leaders, secretary, case manager)	1	2	3
Regular meeting space with access to telephone	1	2	3
Case assignment and management procedures	1	2	3
Inter-team communication system	1	2	3

Intervention and Recommendations

Continuous monitoring of student progress, parent involvement, and recommendations	1	2	3
Written guidelines used for dealing with problems that are beyond the scope of the school's responsibility (e.g. provision of treatment, suicidal assessment)	1	2	3
Written information available on community resources, services, and other options	1	2	3

Follow-up and Support

School resources are available and accessible	1	2	3
Procedures promote student access to, and compliance with, school and community services and treatment recommendations	1	2	3
Continuous monitoring of student progress, parent involvement and treatment recommendations compliance	1	2	3

Training

Team members have opportunity and support for advanced SAP training	1	2	3
School and community agency staff participate in ongoing SAP training	1	2	3

Outcome Indicators and Evaluation

SAP monitoring and improvement mechanisms are in place	1	2	3
Stakeholder input and suggestions are solicited and utilized	1	2	3

REFERENCES

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Student Assistance Program Resources

Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program: http://www.sap.state.pa.us/

Adolescent and School Health: http://www.cdc.gov/

National Student Assistance Association, 2000: http://www.nasap.org/

Pennsylvania Student Assistance Professionals: http://www.pasap.org

UCLA School Mental Health Project: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/